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Memoirs of
Sir Walter Scott

BY

J. G. LOCKHART

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1808

BEFORE Marmion was published, a heavy task, begun earlier than the poem and continued throughout its progress, had been nearly completed; and there appeared in the last week of April 1808, 'The Works of John Dryden, now first collected; illustrated with notes historical, critical, and explanatory, and a Life of the Author.—By Walter Scott, Esq. Eighteen volumes, 8vo.' This was the bold speculation of William Miller of Albemarle Street, London; and the editor's fee, at forty guineas the volume, was £756. The bulk of the collection, the neglect into which a majority of the pieces included in it had fallen, the obsoleteness of the party politics which had so largely exercised the author's pen, and the indecorum, not seldom running into flagrant indecency, by which transcendent genius had ministered to the appetites of a licentious age, all combined to make the warmest of Scott's friends and admirers doubt whether even his skill and reputation would be found sufficient to ensure the success of this undertaking. It was, however, better received than any one, except perhaps the courageous bookseller himself, had anticipated. The entire work was reprinted in 1821; and more lately the Life of Dryden has been twice republished in collective editions of Scott's prose miscellanies; nor, perhaps, does that class of his writings include any piece of considerable extent that has, on the whole, obtained higher estimation.

This edition of Dryden was criticised in the Edinburgh Review for October 1808, with great ability, and, on the whole, with admirable candour. The industry and perspicacity with which Scott had carried through his editorial researches and annotations were acknowledged in terms which, had he known the name of his reviewer, must have been doubly gratifying to his feelings; and it was confessed that, in the life of his author, he had corrected with patient honesty, and filled up with lucid and expansive detail, the sometimes careless and often naked outline of Johnson's masterly Essay on the same subject. It would be superfluous to quote in this place a specimen of critical skill which has already enjoyed such wide circulation, and which will hereafter, no doubt, be included in the miscellaneous prose works of HALLAM. The points of political faith on which that great writer dissents from the editor of Dryden would, even if I had the inclination to pursue such a discussion, lead me far astray from the immediate object of these pages; they embrace questions on which the best and wisest of our countrymen will probably continue to take opposite sides, as long as our past history excites a living interest, and our literature is that of an active nation. On the poetical character of Dryden I think the editor and his critic will be found to have expressed substantially much the same judgment; when they appear to differ, the battle strikes me as being about words rather than things, as is likely to be the case when men of such abilities and attainments approach a subject remote from their personal passions. As might have been expected, the terse and dexterous reviewer has often the better in this logomachy;

but when the balance is struck, we discover here, as elsewhere, that Scott's broad and masculine understanding had, by whatever happy hardihood, grasped the very result to which others win their way by the more cautious processes of logical investigation. While nothing has been found easier than to attack his details, his general views on critical questions have seldom, if ever, been successfully impugned.

I wish I could believe that Scott's labours had been sufficient to recall Dryden to his rightful station, not in the opinion of those who make literature the business or chief solace of their lives—for with them he had never forfeited it—but in the general favour of the intelligent public. That such has been the case, however, the not rapid sale of two editions, aided as they were by the greatest of living names, can be no proof; nor have I observed among the numberless recent speculations of the English booksellers, a single reprint of even those tales, satires, and critical essays, not to be familiar with which would, in the last age, have been considered as disgraceful in any one making the least pretension to letters. In the hope of exciting the curiosity, at least, of some of the thousands of young persons who seem to be growing up in contented ignorance of one of the greatest of our masters, I shall transcribe what George Ellis—whose misgivings about Scott's edition, when first undertaken, had been so serious—was pleased to write some months after its completion.

'CLAREMONT, *2nd September* 1808.

'I must confess that I took up the book with some degree of trepidation, considering an edition of such a writer as on every account *periculosæ plenum opus aleæ;* but as soon as I became acquainted with your plan I proceeded boldly, and really feel at this moment sincerely grateful to you for much exquisite amusement. It now seems to me that your critical remarks ought to have occurred to myself. Such a passionate admirer of Dryden's fables, the noblest specimen of versification (in my mind) that is to be found in any modern language, ought to have perused his theatrical pieces with more candour than I did, and to have attributed to the bad taste of the age, rather than to his own, the numerous defects by which those hasty compositions are certainly deformed. I ought to have considered that whatever Dryden wrote must, for some reason or other, be worth reading; that his bombast and his indelicacy, however disgusting, were not without their use to any one who took an interest in our literary history; that—in short, there are a thousand reflections which I ought to have made and never did make, and the result was that *your* Dryden was to me a perfectly new book. It is certainly painful to see a race-horse in a hackney-chaise, but when one considers that he will suffer infinitely less from the violent exertion to which he is condemned than a creature of inferior race—and that the wretched cock-tail on whom the same task is usually imposed must shortly become a martyr in the service,—one's conscience becomes more at ease, and we are enabled to enjoy Dr. Johnson's favourite pleasure of rapid motion without much remorse on the score of its cruelty. Since, then, your hackneyman is not furnished with a whip, and you can so easily canter from post to post, go on and prosper!'

To return for a moment to Scott's Biography of Dryden—the only life of a great poet which he has left us, and also his only detailed work on the personal fortunes of one to whom literature was a profession—it was penned just when he had begun to apprehend his own destiny. On this point of view, forbidden to contemporary delicacy, we may now pause with blameless curiosity. Seriously as he must have in those days been revolving the hazards of literary enterprise, he could not, it is probable, have handled any subject of this class without letting out here and there thoughts and feelings proper to his own biographer's province; but, widely as he and his predecessor may appear to stand apart as regards some of the most important both of intellectual and moral characteristics, they had nevertheless many features of resemblance, both as men and as authors; and I doubt if the entire range of our annals could have furnished a theme more calculated to keep Scott's scrutinizing interest awake, than that which opened on him as he contemplated step by step the career of Dryden.

There are grave lessons which that story was not needed to enforce upon his mind: he required no such beacon to make him revolt from paltering with the dignity of woman, or the passions of youth, or insulting by splenetic levities the religious convictions of any portion of his countrymen. But Dryden's prostitution of his genius to the petty bitternesses of political warfare, and the consequences both as to the party he served, and the antagonists he provoked, might well supply matter for serious consideration to the author of the Melville song. 'Where,' says Scott, 'is the expert swordsman that does not delight in the flourish of his weapon? and a brave man will least of all withdraw himself from his ancient standard when the tide of battle beats against it.' But he says also,—and I know enough of his own then recent experiences, in his intercourse with some who had been among his earliest and dearest associates, not to apply the language to the circumstances that suggested it—'He who keenly engages in political controversy must not only encounter the vulgar abuse which he may justly contemn, but the altered eye of friends whose regard is chilled.' Nor, when he adds that 'the protecting zeal of his party did not compensate Dryden for the loss of those whom he alienated in their service,' can I help connecting this reflection too with his own subsequent abstinence from party personalities, in which, had the expert swordsman's delight in the flourish of his weapon prevailed, he might have rivalled the success of either Dryden or Swift, to be repaid like them by the settled rancour of Whigs, and the jealous ingratitude of Tories.

It is curious enough to compare the hesitating style of his apology for that tinge of evanescent superstition which seems to have clouded occasionally Dryden's bright and solid mind, with the open avowal that he has 'pride in recording his author's decided admiration of old ballads and popular tales'; and perhaps his personal feelings were hardly less his prompter where he dismisses with brief scorn the sins of negligence and haste, which had been so often urged against Dryden. 'Nothing,' he says, 'is so easily attained as the power of presenting the extrinsic qualities of fine painting, fine music, or fine poetry; the beauty of colour and outline, the combination of notes, the melody of versification, may be imitated by artists of mediocrity; and many will view, hear, or peruse their performances, without being able positively to discover why they should not, since composed according to all the rules, afford pleasure equal to those of Raphael, Handel, or Dryden. The deficiency lies in the vivifying spirit, which, like *alcohol*, may be reduced to the same principle in all the fine arts. The French are said to possess the best possible rules for building ships of war, although not equally remarkable for their power of fighting them. When criticism becomes a pursuit separate from poetry, those who follow it are apt to forget that the legitimate ends of the art for which they lay down rules, are instruction and delight, and that these points being attained, by what road soever, entitles a poet to claim the prize of successful merit. Neither did the learned authors of these disquisitions sufficiently attend to the general disposition of mankind, which cannot be contented even with the happiest imitations of former excellence, but demands novelty as a necessary ingredient for amusement. To insist that every epic poem shall have the plan of the Iliad, and every tragedy be modelled by the rules of Aristotle, resembles the principle of the architect who should build all his houses with the same number of windows and of stories. It happened, too, inevitably, that the critics, in the plenipotential authority which they exercised, often assumed as indispensable requisites of the drama, or epopeia, circumstances which, in the great authorities they quoted, were altogether accidental or indifferent. These they erected into laws, and handed down as essential; although the forms prescribed have often as little to do with the merit and success of the original from which they are taken, as the shape of the drinking-glass with the flavour of the wine which it contains.' These sentences appear, from the dates, to have been penned immediately after the biographer of Dryden (who wrote no epic) had perused the Edinburgh Review on Marmion.

I conclude with a passage, in writing which he seems to have anticipated the only serious critical charge that was ever brought against his edition of Dryden as a whole —namely, the loose and irregular way in which his own æsthetical notions are indicated, rather than expounded. 'While Dryden,' says Scott, 'examined, discussed, admitted, or rejected the rules proposed by others, he forbore, from *prudence*, *indolence*, or *a regard for the freedom of Parnassus*, to erect himself into a legislator. His doctrines are scattered without system or pretence to it:—it is impossible to read far without finding some maxim for doing, or forbearing, which every student of poetry will do well to engrave upon the tablets of his memory; but the author's mode of instruction is neither harsh nor dictatorial.'

On the whole, it is impossible to doubt that the success of Dryden in rapidly reaching, and till the end of a long life holding undisputed, the summit of public favour and reputation, in spite of his 'brave neglect' of minute finishing, narrow laws, and prejudiced authorities, must have had a powerful effect in nerving Scott's hope and resolution for the wide ocean of literary enterprise into which he had now fairly launched his bark. Like Dryden, he felt himself to be 'amply stored with acquired knowledge, much of it the fruits of early reading and application'; anticipated that, though, 'while engaged in the hurry of composition, or overcome by the lassitude of continued literary labour,' he should sometimes 'draw with too much liberality on a tenacious memory,' no 'occasional imperfections would deprive him of his praise'; in short, made up his mind that 'pointed and nicely-turned lines, sedulous study, and long and repeated correction and revision,' would all be dispensed with,—provided their place were supplied, as in Dryden, by 'rapidity of conception, a readiness of expressing every idea, without losing anything by the way,' 'perpetual animation and elasticity of thought'; and language 'never laboured, never loitering, never (in Dryden's own phrase) *cursedly confined*.'

Scott's correspondence, about the time when his Dryden was published, is a good deal occupied with a wild project of his friend Henry Weber—that of an extensive edition of our Ancient Metrical Romances, for which, in their own original dimensions, the enthusiastic German supposed the public appetite to have been set on edge by the 'Specimens' of Ellis, and imperfectly gratified by the text of Sir Tristrem. Scott assured him that Ellis's work had been popular, rather in spite than by reason of the antique verses introduced here and there among his witty and sparkling prose; while Ellis told him, with equal truth, that the Tristrem had gone through two editions, simply owing to the celebrity of its editor's name; and that, of a hundred that had purchased the book, ninety-nine had read only the preface and notes, but not one syllable of True Thomas's 'quaint Inglis.' Weber, in reply to Ellis, alleged that Scott had not had leisure to consider his plan so fully as it deserved; that nothing could prevent its success, provided Scott would write a preliminary essay, and let his name appear in the title-page, along with his own; and though Scott wholly declined this last proposal, he persisted for some months in a negotiation with the London booksellers, which ended as both his patrons had foreseen.

'But how is this?'—(Ellis writes)—'Weber tells me he is afraid Mr. Scott will not be able to do anything for the recommendation of his *Romances*, because he is himself engaged in no less than five different literary enterprises, some of them of immense extent. Five? Why, no combination of blood and bone can possibly stand this; and Sir John Sinclair, however successful in pointing out the best modes of feeding common gladiators, has not discovered the means of training minds to such endless fatigue. I dare not ask you for an account of these projects, nor even for a letter during the continuance of this seven years' apprenticeship, and only request that you will, after the completion of your labours, take measures to lay my ghost, which will infallibly be walking before that time, and suffering all the pains of unsatisfied curiosity. Seriously, I don't quite like your imposing on yourself such a series of tasks. Some *one* is, I believe, always of service—because, whatever you write at the same time, *con amore*, comes in as a relaxation, and is likely to receive more spirit and gaiety from that circumstance; besides which, every species of study perhaps is capable of furnishing allusions, and adding vigour and solidity to poetry. Too constant attention to what they call their art, and too much solicitude about its minutiæ, has been, I think, the fault of every poet since Pope; perhaps it was his too—perhaps the frequent and varied studies imposed upon him by his necessities contributed, in some measure, to Dryden's characteristic splendour of style. Yet, surely, the best poet of the age ought not to be incessantly employed in the drudgeries of literature. I shall lament if you are effectually distracted from the exercise of the talent in which you are confessedly without a rival.'

The poet answers as follows:—'My giving my name to Weber's Romances is out of the question, as assuredly I have not time to do anything that can entitle it to stand in his title-page; but I will do all I can for him in the business. By the by, I wish he would be either more chary in his communications on the subject of my employments, or more accurate. I often employ his assistance in making extracts, etc., and I may say to him as Lord Ogleby does to Canton, that he never sees me *badiner* a little with a subject, but he suspects mischief—to wit, an edition. In the meantime, suffice it to say that I have done with poetry for some time—it is a scourging crop, and ought not to be hastily repeated. Editing, therefore, may be considered as a green crop of turnips or peas, extremely useful for those whose circumstances do not admit of giving their farm a summer fallow. Swift is my *grande opus* at present, though I am under engagements, of old standing, to write a Life of Thomson from some original materials. I have completed an edition of some State Papers of Sir Ralph Sadler, which I believe you will find curious; I have, moreover, arranged for republication the more early volumes of Somers's Tracts; but these are neither toilsome nor exhausting labours. Swift, in fact, is my only task of great importance. My present official employment leaves my time very much my own, even while the courts are sitting—and entirely so in the vacation. My health is strong, and my mind active; I will therefore do as much as I can with justice to the tasks I have undertaken, and rest when advanced age and more independent circumstances entitle me to repose.'

This letter is dated Ashestiel, October 8, 1808; but it carries us back to the month of April, when the Dryden was completed. His engagements with London publishers respecting the Somers and the Sadler, were, I believe, entered into before the end of 1807; but Constable appears to have first ascertained them when he accompanied the second cargo of Marmion to the great southern market; and, alarmed at the prospect of losing his hold on Scott's industry, he at once invited him to follow up his Dryden by an Edition of Swift on the same scale,—offering, moreover, to double the rate of payment which he had contracted for with the London publisher of the Dryden; that is to say, to give him £1500 for the new undertaking. This munificent tender was accepted without hesitation; and as early as May 1808, I find Scott writing to his literary allies in all directions for books, pamphlets, and MSS. materials likely to be serviceable in completing and illustrating the Life and Works of the Dean of St. Patrick's. While these were accumulating about him, which they soon did in greater abundance than he had anticipated, he concluded his labours on Sadler's State Papers, characteristically undervalued in his letter to Ellis, and kept pace, at the same time, with Ballantyne, as the huge collection of the Somers' Tracts continued to move through the press. The Sadler was published in the course of 1809, in three large volumes, quarto; but the last of the thirteen equally ponderous tomes to which Somers extended was not dismissed from his desk until towards the conclusion of 1812.

But these were not his only tasks during the summer and autumn of 1808; and if he had not '*five* different enterprises' on his hands when Weber said so to Ellis, he had more than five very soon after. He edited this year Strutt's unfinished romance of Queenhoo-Hall, and equipped the fourth volume with a conclusion in the fashion of the original;[1] but how little he thought of this matter may be guessed from one of his notes to Ballantyne, in which he says, 'I wish you would see how far the copy of Queenhoo-Hall, sent last night, extends, that I may not write more nonsense than enough.' The publisher of this work was John Murray, of London. It was immediately preceded by a reprint of Captain Carleton's Memoirs of the War of the Spanish Succession, to which he gave a lively preface and various notes; and followed by a similar edition of the Memoirs of Robert Cary, Earl of Monmouth, —each of these being a single octavo, printed by Ballantyne and published by Constable.

The republication of Carleton,[2] Johnson's eulogy of which fills a pleasant page in Boswell, had probably been suggested by the lively interest which Scott took in the first outburst of Spanish patriotism consequent on Napoleon's transactions at Bayonne. There is one passage in the preface which I must indulge myself by transcribing. Speaking of the absurd recall of Peterborough, from the command in which he had exhibited such a wonderful combination of patience and prudence with military daring, he says—'One ostensible reason was, that Peterborough's parts were of too lively and mercurial a quality, and that his letters showed more wit than became a General;—a commonplace objection, raised by the dull malignity of commonplace minds, against those whom they see discharging with ease and indifference the tasks which they themselves execute (if at all) with the sweat of their brow and in the heaviness of their hearts. There is a certain hypocrisy in business, whether civil or military, as well as in religion, which they will do well to observe who, not satisfied with discharging their duty, desire also the good repute of men.' It was not long before some of the dull malignants of the Parliament House began to insinuate what at length found a dull and dignified mouthpiece in the House of Commons—that if a Clerk of Session had any real business to do, it could not be done well by a man who found time for more literary enterprises than any other author of the age undertook—'wrote more books,' Lord Archibald Hamilton serenely added, 'than anybody could find leisure to read'—and, moreover, mingled in general society as much as many that had no pursuit but pleasure.

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[1] See General Preface to Waverley, pp. xiv.-xvii., and Appendix No. II. p. lxv.

[2] It seems to be now pretty generally believed that Carleton's Memoirs were among the numberless fabrications of De Foe; but in this case (if the fact indeed be so), as in that of his *Cavalier*, he no doubt had before him the rude journal of some officer who had fought and bled in the campaigns described with such an inimitable air of truth.

The eager struggling of the different booksellers to engage Scott at this time, is a very amusing feature in the voluminous correspondence before me. Had he possessed treble the energy for which it was possible to give any man credit, he could never have encountered a tithe of the projects that the post brought day after day to him, announced with extravagant enthusiasm, and urged with all the arts of conciliation. I shall mention only one out of at least a dozen gigantic schemes which were thus proposed before he had well settled himself to his Swift; and I do so, because something of the kind was a few years later carried into execution. This was a General Edition of British Novelists, beginning with De Foe and reaching to the end of the last century; to be set forth with biographical prefaces and illustrative notes by Scott, and printed of course by Ballantyne. The projector was Murray, who was now eager to start on all points in the race with Constable; but this was not, as we shall see presently, the only business that prompted my enterprising friend's first visit to Ashestiel.

Conversing with Scott, many years afterwards, about the tumult of engagements in which he was thus involved, he said, 'Ay, it was enough to tear me to pieces, but there was a wonderful exhilaration about it all: my blood was kept at fever-pitch—I felt as if I could have grappled with anything and everything; then, there was hardly one of all my schemes that did not afford me the means of serving some poor devil of a brother author. There were always huge piles of materials to be arranged, sifted, and indexed—volumes of extracts to be transcribed—journeys to be made hither and thither, for ascertaining little facts and dates,—in short, I could commonly keep half-a-dozen of the ragged regiment of Parnassus in tolerable case.' I said he must have felt something like what a locomotive engine on a railway might be supposed to do, when a score of coal waggons are seen linking themselves to it the moment it gets the steam up, and it rushes on its course regardless of the burden. 'Yes,' said he, laughing, and making a crashing cut with his axe (for we were felling larches); 'but there was a cursed lot of dung-carts too.' He was seldom, in fact, without some of these appendages; and I admired nothing more in him than the patient courtesy, the unwearied gentle kindness with which he always treated them, in spite of their delays and blunders, to say nothing of the almost incredible vanity and presumption which more than one of them often exhibited in the midst of their fawning; and I believe, with all their faults, the worst and weakest of them repaid him by a canine fidelity of affection. This part of Scott's character recalls by far the most pleasing trait in that of his last predecessor in the plenitude of literary authority—Dr. Johnson. There was perhaps nothing (except the one great blunder) that had a worse effect on the course of his pecuniary fortunes, than the readiness with which he exerted his interest with the booksellers on behalf of inferior writers. Even from the commencement of his connexion with Constable in particular, I can trace a continual series of such applications. They stimulated the already too sanguine publisher to numberless risks; and when these failed, the result was, in one shape or another, some corresponding deduction from the fair profits of his own literary labour. 'I like well,' Constable was often heard to say in the sequel, 'I like well Scott's *ain bairns*—but heaven preserve me from those of his fathering!'

Every now and then, however, he had the rich compensation of finding that his interference had really promoted the worldly interests of some meritorious obscure. Early in 1808 he tasted this pleasure, in the case of a poetical shoemaker of Glasgow, Mr. John Struthers, a man of rare worth and very considerable genius, whose 'Poor Man's Sabbath' was recommended to his notice by Joanna Baillie, and shortly after published, at his desire, by Mr. Constable. He thus writes to Miss Baillie from Ashestiel, on the 9th of May 1808:—

'Your letter found me in this quiet corner, and while it always gives me pride and pleasure to hear from you, I am truly concerned at Constable's unaccountable delays. I suppose that, in the hurry of his departure for London, his promise to write Mr. Struthers had escaped; as for any desire to quit his bargain, it is out of the question. If Mr. Struthers will send to my house in Castle Street the manuscript designed for the press, I will get him a short bill for the copy-money the moment Constable returns, or perhaps before he comes down. He may rely on the bargain being definitively settled, and the printing will, I suppose, be begun immediately on the great bibliopolist's return; on which occasion I shall have, according to good old phrase, "a crow to pluck with him, and a pock to put the feathers in." I heartily wish we could have had the honour to see Miss Agnes and you at our little farm, which is now in its glory—all the twigs bursting into leaf, and all the lambs skipping on the hills. I have been fishing almost from morning till night;

and Mrs. Scott, and two ladies our guests, are wandering about on the banks in the most Arcadian fashion in the world. We are just on the point of setting out on a pilgrimage to the "bonny bush aboon Traquhair," which I believe will occupy us all the morning. Adieu, my dear Miss Baillie. Nothing will give me more pleasure than to hear that you have found the northern breezes fraught with inspiration. You are not entitled to spare yourself, and none is so deeply interested in your labours as your truly respectful friend and admirer,

'WALTER SCOTT.

'*P.S.*—We quit our quiet pastures to return to Edinburgh on the 10th. So Mr. Struthers' parcel will find me there, if he is pleased to intrust me with the care of it.'

Mr. Struthers' volume was unfortunate in bearing a title so very like that of James Grahame's Sabbath, which, though not written sooner, had been published a year or two before. This much interfered with its success, yet it was not on the whole unsuccessful : it put some £30 or £40 into the pocket of a good man, to whom this was a considerable supply ; but it made his name and character known, and thus served him far more essentially ; for he wisely continued to cultivate his poetical talents without neglecting the opportunity, thus afforded him through them, of pursuing his original calling under better advantages. It is said that the solitary and meditative generation of cobblers have produced a larger list of murders and other domestic crimes than any other mechanical trade except the butchers ; but the sons of Crispin have, to balance their account, a not less disproportionate catalogue of poets ; and foremost among these stands the pious author of the Poor Man's Sabbath ; one of the very few that have had sense and fortitude to resist the innumerable temptations to which any measure of celebrity exposes persons of their class. I believe Mr. Struthers still survives to enjoy the retrospect of a long and virtuous life. His letters to Scott are equally creditable to his taste and his feelings, and sometime after we shall find him making a pilgrimage of gratitude to Ashestiel.[1]

James Hogg was by this time beginning to be generally known and appreciated in Scotland; and the popularity of his 'Mountain Bard' encouraged Scott to more strenuous intercession in his behalf. I have before me a long array of letters on this subject, which passed between Scott and the Earl of Dalkeith and his brother Lord Montagu, in 1808. Hogg's prime ambition at this period was to procure an ensigncy in a militia regiment, and he seems to have set little by Scott's representations that the pay of such a situation was very small, and that, if he obtained it, he would probably find his relations with his brother officers far from agreeable. There was, however, another objection which Scott could not hint to the aspirant himself, but which seems to have been duly considered by those who were anxious to promote his views. Militia officers of that day were by no means unlikely to see their nerves put to the test; and the Shepherd's—though he wrote some capital war-songs, especially *Donald Macdonald*—were not heroically strung. This was in truth no secret among his early intimates, though he had not measured himself at all exactly on that score, and was even tempted, when he found there was no chance of the militia epaulette, to threaten that he would 'list for a soldier' in a marching regiment. Notwithstanding at least one melancholy precedent, the Excise, which would have suited him almost as badly as 'hugging Brown Bess,' was next thought of; and the Shepherd himself seems to have entered into that plan with considerable alacrity: but I know not whether he changed his mind, or what other cause prevented such an appointment from taking place. After various shiftings he at last obtained, as we shall see, from the late Duke of Buccleuch's munificence, the gratuitous life-rent of a small farm in the vale of Yarrow; and had he contented himself with the careful management of its fields, the rest of his days might have been easy. But he could not withstand the attractions of Edinburgh, which carried him away from Altrive for months every year; and when at home, a warm and hospitable disposition, so often stirred by vanity less pardonable than his, made him convert his cottage into an unpaid hostelrie for the reception of endless troops of thoughtless admirers; and thus, in spite of much help and much forbearance, he was never out of one set of pecuniary difficulties before he had began to weave the meshes of some fresh entanglement. *In pace requiescat.* There will never be such an Ettrick Shepherd again.

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[1] I am happy to learn, as this page passes through the press, from my friend Mr. John Kerr of Glasgow, that about three years ago Mr. Struthers was appointed keeper of Stirling's Library, a collection of some consequence in that city. The selection of him for this respectable situation reflects honour on the directors of the institution.—[December 1836.]

The following is an extract from a letter of Scott's to his brother Thomas, dated 20th June 1808:—

'Excellent news to-day from Spain—yet I wish the patriots had a leader of genius and influence. I fear the Castilian nobility are more sunk than the common people, and that it will be easier to find armies than generals. A Wallace, Dundee, or Montrose, would be the man for Spain at this moment. It is, however, a consolation, that though the grandees of the earth, when the post of honour becomes the post of danger, may be less ambitious of occupying it, there may be some hidalgo among the mountains of Asturias with all the spirit of the Cid Ruy Diaz, or Don Pelayo, or Don Quixote if you will, whose gallantry was only impeachable from the objects on which he exercised it. It strikes me as very singular to have all the places mentioned in Don Quixote and Gil Blas now the scenes of real and important events. Gazettes dated from Oviedo, and gorges fortified in the Sierra Morena, sounds like history in the land of romance.

'James Hogg has driven his pigs to a bad market. I am endeavouring, as a *pis aller*, to have him made an Excise officer, that station being, with respect to Scottish geniuses, the grave of all the Capulets. Witness Adam Smith, Burns,' etc.

I mentioned the name of Joanna Baillie (for 'who,' as Scott says in a letter of this time, 'ever speaks of Miss Sappho?') in connexion with the MS. of the Poor Man's Sabbath. From Glasgow, where she had found out Struthers in April, she proceeded to Edinburgh, and took up her abode for a week or two under Scott's roof. Their acquaintance was thus knit into a deep and respectful affection on both sides; and henceforth they maintained a close epistolary correspondence, which will, I think, supply this compilation with some of the most interesting of its materials. But within a few weeks after Joanna's departure, he was to commence another intimacy not less sincere and cordial; and when I name Mr. Morritt of Rokeby, I have done enough to prepare many of my readers to expect not inferior gratification from the still more abundant series of letters in which, from this time to the end of his life, Scott communicated his thoughts and feelings to one of the most accomplished men that ever shared his confidence. He had now reached a period of life after which real friendships are but seldom formed; and it is fortunate that another English one had been thoroughly compacted before death cut the ties between him and George Ellis—because his dearest intimates within Scotland had of course but a slender part in his written correspondence.

Several friends had written to recommend Mr. Morritt to his acquaintance—among others, Mr. W. S. Rose and Lady Louisa Stuart. His answer to her ladyship I must insert here, for the sake of the late inimitable Lydia White, who so long ruled without a rival in the soft realm of *blue* Mayfair:—

'EDINBURGH, 16*th June* 1808.

'MY DEAR LADY LOUISA—Nothing will give us more pleasure than to have the honour of showing every attention in our power to Mr. and Mrs. Morritt, and I am particularly happy in a circumstance that at once promises me a great deal of pleasure in the acquaintance of your Ladyship's friends, and affords me the satisfaction of hearing from you again. Pray don't triumph over me too much in the case of Lydia. I stood a very respectable siege; but she caressed my wife, coaxed my children, and made, by dint of cake and pudding, some impression even upon the affections of my favourite dog:—so, when all the outworks were carried, the main fortress had no choice but to surrender on honourable terms. To the best of my thinking, notwithstanding the cerulean hue of her stockings, and a most plentiful stock of eccentric affectation, she is really at bottom a good-natured woman, with much liveliness and some talent. She is now set out to the Highlands, where she is likely to encounter many adventures. Mrs. Scott and I went as far as Loch Catrine with her, from which jaunt I have just returned. We had most heavenly weather, which was peculiarly favourable to my fair companions' zeal for sketching every object that fell in their way, from a castle to a pigeon-house. Did your Ladyship ever travel with a *drawing* companion? Mine drew like cart-horses, as well in laborious zeal as in effect; for, after all, I could not help hinting that the cataracts delineated bore a singular resemblance to haycocks, and the rocks much correspondence to large old-fashioned cabinets with their folding-doors open. So much for Lydia, whom I left on her journey through the Highlands, but by what route she had not resolved. I gave her three plans, and think it likely she will adopt none of them: moreover, when the executive government of postilions, landlords, and Highland boatmen devolves upon her English servant instead of me, I am afraid the distresses of the errant damsels will fall a little beneath the dignity of romances. All this nonsense is *entre nous*, for Miss White has been actively zealous in getting me some Irish correspondence about Swift, and otherwise very obliging.

'It is not with my inclination that I fag for the booksellers; but what can I do? My poverty and not my will consents. The income of my office is only reversionary, and my private fortune much limited. My poetical success fairly destroyed my prospects of professional success, and obliged me to retire from the Bar; for though I had a competent share of information and industry, who would trust their cause to the author of the Lay of the Last Minstrel? Now, although I do allow that an author should take care of his literary character, yet I think the least thing that his literary character can do in return is to take some care of the author, who is unfortunately, like Jeremy in *Love for Love*, furnished with a set of tastes and appetites which would do honour to the income of a Duke if he had it. Besides, I go to work with Swift *con amore;* for, like Dryden, he is an early favourite of mine. The Marmion is nearly out, and I have made one or two alterations on the third edition, with which the press is now groaning. So soon as it is, it will make the number of copies published within the space of six months amount to eight thousand,—an immense number surely, and enough to comfort the author's wounded feelings, had the claws of the reviewers been able to reach him through the *steel jack* of true Border indifference.—Your Ladyship's much obliged and faithful servant, WALTER SCOTT.'

Mr. and Mrs. Morritt reached Edinburgh soon after this letter was written. Scott showed them the lions of the town and its vicinity, exactly as if he had nothing else to attend to but their gratification; and Mr. Morritt recollects with particular pleasure one long day spent in rambling along the Esk by Roslin and Hawthornden,

> Where Jonson sat in Drummond's social shade,

down to the old haunts of Lasswade.

'When we approached that village,' says the Memorandum with which Mr. Morritt favours me, 'Scott, who had laid hold of my arm, turned along the road in a direction not leading to the place where the carriage was to meet us. After walking some minutes towards Edinburgh, I suggested that we were losing the scenery of the Esk, and, besides, had Dalkeith Palace yet to see.

"Yes," said he, "and I have been bringing you where there is little enough to be seen—only that Scotch cottage"—one by the roadside, with a small garth;—"but, though not worth looking at, I could not pass it. It was our first country-house when newly married, and many a contrivance we had to make it comfortable. I made a dining-table for it with my own hands. Look at these two miserable willow-trees on either side the gate into the enclosure; they are tied together at the top to be an arch, and a cross made of two sticks over them is not yet decayed. To be sure, it is not much of a lion to show a stranger; but I wanted to see it again myself, for I assure you that after I had constructed it, *mamma*" (Mrs. Scott) "and I both of us thought it so fine, we turned out to see it by moonlight, and walked backwards from it to the cottage door, in admiration of our own magnificence and its picturesque effect. I did want to see if it was still there—so now we will look after the barouche, and make the best of our way to Dalkeith." Such were the natural feelings that endeared the Author of Marmion and the Lay to those who "saw him in his happier hours of social pleasure." His person at that time may be exactly known from Raeburn's first picture, which had just been executed for his bookseller, Constable, and which was a most faithful likeness of him and his dog Camp. The literal fidelity of the portraiture, however, is its principal merit. The expression is serious and contemplative, very unlike the hilarity and vivacity then habitual to his speaking face, but quite true to what it was in the absence of such excitement. His features struck me at first as commonplace and heavy,—but they were almost always lighted up by the flashes of the mind within. This required a hand more masterly than Raeburn's; and indeed, in my own opinion, Chantrey alone has in his bust attained that, in his case, most difficult task of portraying the features faithfully, and yet giving the real and transient expression of the countenance when animated.

'We passed a week in Edinburgh, chiefly in his society and that of his friends the Mackenzies. We were so far on our way to Brahan Castle, in Ross-shire. Scott unlocked all his antiquarian lore, and supplied us with numberless *data*, such as no guide-book could have furnished, and such as his own Monkbarns might have delighted to give. It would be idle to tell how much pleasure and instruction his advice added to a tour in itself so productive of both, as well as of private friendships and intimacies, now too generally terminated by death, but never severed by caprice or disappointment. His was added to the number by our reception now in Edinburgh, and, on our return from the Highlands, at Ashestiel—where he had made us promise to visit him, saying that the farm-house had pigeon-holes enough for such of his friends as could live, like him, on Tweed salmon and Forest mutton. There he was the cherished friend and kind neighbour of every middling Selkirkshire yeoman, just as easily as in Edinburgh he was the companion of clever youth and narrative old age in refined society. He carried us one day to Melrose Abbey or Newark—another, to course with mountain greyhounds by Yarrow braes or St. Mary's loch, repeating every ballad or legendary tale connected with the scenery—and on a third, we must all go to a farmer's *kirn*, or harvest-home, to dance with Border lasses on a barn floor, drink whisky punch, and enter with him into all the gossip and good fellowship of his neighbours, on a complete footing of unrestrained conviviality, equality, and mutual respect. His wife and happy young family were clustered round him, and the cordiality of his reception would have unbent a misanthrope.

'At this period his conversation was more equal and animated than any man's that I ever knew. It was most characterised by the extreme felicity and fun of his illustrations, drawn from the whole encyclopædia of life and nature, in a style sometimes too exuberant for written narrative, but which to him was natural and spontaneous. A hundred stories, always apposite, and often interesting the mind by strong pathos, or eminently ludicrous, were daily told, which, with many more, have since been transplanted, almost in the same language, into the Waverley novels and his other writings. These and his recitations of poetry, which can never be forgotten by those who knew him, made up the charm that his boundless memory enabled him to exert to the wonder of the gaping lovers of wonders. But equally impressive and powerful was the language of his warm heart, and equally wonderful were the conclusions of his vigorous understanding, to those who could return or appreciate either. Among a number of such recollections, I have seen many of the thoughts which then passed through his mind embodied in the delightful prefaces annexed late in life to his poetry and novels. Those on literary quarrels and literary irritability are exactly what he then expressed. Keenly enjoying literature as he did, and indulging his own love of it in perpetual composition, he always maintained the same estimate of it as subordinate and auxiliary to the purposes of life, and rather talked of men and events than of books and criticism. Literary fame, he always said, was a bright feather in the cap, but not the substantial cover of a well-protected head. This sound and manly feeling was what I have seen described by some of his biographers as *pride;* and it will always be thought so by those whose own vanity can only be gratified by the admiration of others, and who mistake shows for realities. None valued the love and applause of others more than Scott; but it was to the love and applause of those he valued in return that he restricted the feeling—without restricting the kindness. Men who did not, or would not, understand this, perpetually mistook him—and, after loading him with undesired eulogy, perhaps in his own house neglected common attention or civility to other parts of his family. It was on such an occasion that I heard him murmur in my ear, "Author as I am, I wish these good people would recollect that I began with being a gentleman, and don't mean to give up the character." Such was all along his feeling, and this, with a slight prejudice common to Scotchmen in favour of ancient and respectable family descent, constituted what in Grub Street is called his *pride*. It was, at least, what Johnson would have justly called *defensive* pride. From all other, and still more from mere vanity, I never knew any man so remarkably free.'

The farmer at whose annual *kirn* Scott and all his household were, in those days, regular guests, was Mr. Laidlaw, the Duke of Buccleuch's tenant on the lands of Peel, which are only separated from the eastern terrace of Ashestiel by the ravine and its brook. Mr. Laidlaw was himself possessed of some landed property in the same neighbourhood, and being considered as wealthy, and fond of his wealth, he was usually called among the country people *Laird Nippy;* an expressive designation which it would be difficult to translate. Though a very dry, demure, and taciturn old presbyterian, he could not resist the Sheriff's jokes; nay, he even gradually subdued his scruples so far as to become a pretty constant attendant at his '*English printed prayers*' on the Sundays; which, indeed, were by this time rather more popular than quite suited the capacity of the parlour-chapel. Mr. Laidlaw's wife was a woman of superior mind and manners—a great reader, and one of the few to whom Scott liked lending his books; for most strict and delicate was he always in the care of them, and indeed, hardly any trivial occurrence ever seemed to touch his temper at all, except anything like irreverent treatment of a book. The intercourse between the family at Ashestiel and this worthy woman and her children was a constant interchange of respect and kindness; but I remember to have heard Scott say that the greatest compliment he had ever received in his life was from the rigid old farmer himself; for, years after he had left Ashestiel, he discovered casually that special care had been taken to keep the turf seat on *the Shirra's knowe* in good repair; and this was much from Nippy.

And here I must set down a story which, most readers will smile to be told, was often repeated by Scott; and always with an air that seemed to me, in spite of his endeavours to the contrary, as grave as the usual aspect of Laird Nippy of the Peel. This neighbour was a distant kinsman of his dear friend William Laidlaw;—so distant, that elsewhere in that condition they would scarcely have remembered any community of blood;—but they both traced their descent, in the ninth degree, to an ancestress who, in the days of John Knox, fell into trouble from a suspicion of witchcraft. In her time the Laidlaws were rich and prosperous, and held rank among the best gentry of Tweeddale; but in some evil hour, her husband, the head of his blood, reproached her with her addiction to the black art, and she, in her anger, cursed the name and lineage of Laidlaw. Her youngest son, who stood by, implored her to revoke the malediction; but in vain. Next day, however, on the renewal of his entreaties, she carried him with her into the woods, made him slay a heifer, sacrificed it to the power of evil in his presence, and then, collecting the ashes in her apron, invited the youth to see her commit them to the river. 'Follow them,' said she, 'from stream to pool, as long as they float visible, and as many streams as you shall then have passed, for so many generations shall your descendants prosper. After that, they shall like the rest of the name be poor, and take their part in my curse.' The streams he counted were nine; 'and now,' Scott would say, 'look round you in this country, and sure enough the Laidlaws are one and all landless men, with the single exception of Auld Nippy!' Many times had I heard both him and William Laidlaw tell this story, before any suspicion got abroad that Nippy's wealth rested on insecure foundations. Year after year, we never escorted a stranger by the Peel, but I heard the tale;—and at last it came with a new conclusion;—'and now, think whatever we choose of it, my good friend Nippy is a bankrupt.'[1]

Mr. Morritt's mention of the 'happy young family clustered round him' at Mr. Laidlaw's *kirn*, reminds me that I ought to say a few words on Scott's method of treating his children in their early days. He had now two boys and two girls;—and he never had more.[1] He was not one of those who take much delight in a mere infant; but no father ever devoted more time and tender care to his offspring than he did to each of his, as they successively reached the age when they could listen to him, and understand his talk. Like their mute playmates, Camp and the greyhounds, they had at all times free access to his study; he never considered their tattle as any disturbance; they went and came as pleased their fancy; he was always ready to answer their questions; and when they, unconscious how he was engaged, entreated him to lay down his pen and tell them a story, he would take them on his knee, repeat a ballad or a legend, kiss them, and set them down again to their marbles or ninepins, and resume his labour as if refreshed by the interruption. From a very early age he made them dine at table, and 'to sit up to supper' was the great reward when they had been 'very good bairns.' In short, he considered it as the highest duty as well as the sweetest pleasure of a parent to be the companion of his children; he partook all their little joys and sorrows, and made his kind unformal instructions to blend so easily and playfully with the current of their own sayings and doings, that so far from regarding him with any distant awe, it was never thought that any sport or diversion could go on in the right way, unless *papa* were of the party, or that the rainiest day could be dull so he were at home.

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[1] I understand the use of the word *bankrupt* here has given offence—and possibly it was not the exact word Scott employed. In common parlance, however, a man is said to be *bankrupt* when his worldly affairs have undergone some disastrous change—and such was certainly the case with Mr. Laidlaw—before he left his old possession of the Peel. —[1839.]

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[1] I may as well transcribe here the rest of the record in Scott's family Bible. After what was quoted in a former chapter, it thus proceeds:—

'24to die Octobris 1799.—*Margareta C. Scott, filiam apud Edinburgum edidit.* 15° *Novembris* 1799, *in Ecclesiam Christianam recepta fuit per baptismum dicta filia, nomenque eni adjectum Charlotta Sophia, per virum reverendum Danielem Sandford; sponsoribus prænobili Arthuro Marchione de Downshire, Sophia Dumergue, et Anna Rutherford matre mea.*

'*Margareta C. Scott puerum edidit.* 28vo *Octobris A.D.* 1801 *apud Edinburgum: nomenque ei adjectum Gualterus, cum per v. rev. Doctorem Danielem Sandford baptizatus erat.*

'*M. C. Scott filiam edidit apud Edinburgum* 2do *die Februarij* 1803, *quæ in Ecclesiam recepta fuit per virum reverendum Doctorem Sandford, nomenque ei adjectum Anna Scott.*

'24to Decem: 1805.—*M. C. Scott apud Edinburgum puerum edidit; qui baptizatus erat per virum reverendum Joannem Thomson, Ministrum de Duddingstone prope Edinburgum, nomenque Carolus illi datum.*'

Of the irregularity of his own education he speaks with considerable regret, in the autobiographical fragment written this year at Ashestiel; yet his practice does not look as if that feeling had been strongly rooted in his mind;—for he never did show much concern about regulating systematically what is usually called *education* in the case of his own children. It seemed, on the contrary, as if he attached little importance to anything else, so he could perceive that the young curiosity was excited—the intellect, by whatever springs of interest, set in motion. He detested and despised the whole generation of modern children's books, in which the attempt is made to convey accurate notions of scientific minutiæ: delighting cordially, on the other hand, in those of the preceding age, which, addressing themselves chiefly to the imagination, obtain through it, as he believed, the best chance of stirring our graver faculties also. He exercised the memory, by selecting for tasks of recitation passages of popular verse the most likely to catch the fancy of children; and gradually familiarized them with the ancient history of their own country, by arresting attention, in the course of his own oral narrations, on incidents and characters of a similar description. Nor did he neglect to use the same means of quickening curiosity as to the events of sacred history. On Sunday he never rode—at least not until his growing infirmity made his pony almost necessary to him—for it was his principle that all domestic animals have a full right to their Sabbath of rest; but after he had read the church service, he usually walked with his whole family, dogs included, to some favourite spot at a considerable distance from the house—most frequently the ruined tower of Elibank—and there dined with them in the open air on a basket of cold provisions, mixing his wine with the water of the brook beside which they all were grouped around him on the turf; and here, or at home, if the weather kept them from their ramble, his Sunday talk was just such a series of biblical lessons as that which we have preserved for the permanent use of rising generations, in his Tales of a Grandfather, on the early history of Scotland. I wish he had committed that other series to writing too;—how different that would have been from our thousand compilations of dead epitome and imbecile cant! He had his Bible, the Old Testament especially, by heart; and on these days inwove the simple pathos or sublime enthusiasm of Scripture, in whatever story he was telling, with the same picturesque richness as he did, in his week-day tales, the quaint Scotch of Pitscottie, or some rude romantic old rhyme from Barbour's Bruce or Blind Harry's Wallace.

By many external accomplishments, either in girl or boy, he set little store. He delighted to hear his daughters sing an old ditty, or one of his own framing; but, so the singer appeared to feel the spirit of her ballad, he was not at all critical of the technical execution. There was one thing, however, on which he fixed his heart hardly less than the ancient Persians of the Cyropædia; like them, next to love of truth, he held love of horsemanship for the prime point of education. As soon as his eldest girl could sit a pony, she was made the regular attendant of his mountain rides; and they all, as they attained sufficient strength, had the like advancement. He taught them to think nothing of tumbles, and habituated them to his own reckless delight in perilous fords and flooded streams; and they all imbibed in great perfection his passion for horses—as well, I may venture to add, as his deep reverence for the more important article of that Persian training. 'Without courage,' he said, 'there cannot be truth; and without truth there can be no other virtue.'

He had a horror of boarding-schools; never allowed his girls to learn anything out of his own house; and chose their governess—(Miss Miller)—who about this time was domesticated with them, and never left them while they needed one,—with far greater regard to her kind good temper and excellent moral and religious principles, than to the measure of her attainments in what are called fashionable accomplishments. The admirable system of education for boys in Scotland combines all the advantages of public and private instruction; his carried their satchels to the High School, when the family was in Edinburgh, just as he had done before them, and shared of course the evening society of their happy home. But he rarely, if ever, left them in town, when he could himself be in the country; and at Ashestiel he was, for better or for worse, his eldest boy's daily tutor, after he began Latin.

The following letter will serve, among other things, to supply a few more details of the domestic life of Ashestiel:—

'*To Miss Joanna Baillie—Hampstead.*

'*Sept.* 20, 1808.

'MY DEAR MISS BAILLIE—The law, you know, makes the husband answerable for the debts of his wife, and therefore gives him a right to approach her creditors with an offer of payment; so that, after witnessing many fruitless and broken resolutions of my Charlotte, I am determined, rather than she and I shall appear longer insensible of your goodness, to intrude a few lines on you to answer the letter you honoured her with some time ago. The secret reason of her procrastination is, I believe, some terror of writing in English—which you know is not her native language—to one who is as much distinguished by her command of it as by the purposes she adapts it to. I wish we had the command of what my old friend Pitscottie calls 'a blink of the sun or a whip of the whirlwind,' to transport you to this solitude before the frost has stript it of its leaves. It is not, indeed (even I must confess), equal in picturesque beauty to the banks of Clyde and Evan;[1] but it is so sequestered, so simple, and so solitary, that it seems just to have beauty enough to delight its inhabitants, without a single attraction for any visitor, except those who come for its inhabitants' sake. And in good sooth, whenever I was tempted to envy the splendid scenery of the lakes of Westmoreland, I always endeavoured to cure my fit of spleen by recollecting that they attract as many idle, insipid, and indolent gazers as any celebrated beauty in the land, and that our scene of pastoral hills and pure streams is like Touchstone's mistress, "a poor thing, but mine own." I regret, however, that these celebrated beauties should have frowned, wept, or pouted upon you, when you honoured them by your visit in summer. Did Miss Agnes Baillie and you meet with any of the poetical inhabitants of that district—Wordsworth, Southey, or Coleridge? The two former would, I am sure, have been happy in paying their respects to you; with the habits and tastes of the latter I am less acquainted.

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[1] Miss Baillie was born at Long-Calderwood, near Hamilton, in Lanarkshire.

'Time has lingered with me from day to day in expectation of being called southward; I now begin to think my journey will hardly take place till winter, or early in spring. One of the most pleasant circumstances attending it will be the opportunity to pay my homage to you, and to claim withal a certain promise concerning a certain play, of which you were so kind as to promise me a reading. I hope you do not permit indolence to lay the paring of her little finger upon you; we cannot afford the interruption to your labours which even that might occasion. And "what are *you* doing?" your politeness will perhaps lead you to say: in answer,—Why, I am very like a certain ancient king, distinguished in the Edda, who, when Lok paid him a visit,—

> Was twisting of collars his dogs to hold,
> And combing the mane of his courser bold.

If this idle man's employment required any apology, we must seek it in the difficulty of seeking food to make savoury messes for our English guests; for we are eight miles from market, and must call in all the country sports to aid the larder. We had here, two days ago, a very pleasant English family, the Morritts of Rokeby Park, in Yorkshire. The gentleman wandered over all Greece, and visited the Troad, to aid in confuting the hypothesis of old Bryant, who contended that Troy town was not taken by the Greeks. His erudition is, however, not of an overbearing kind, which was lucky for me, who am but a slender classical scholar. Charlotte's kindest and best wishes attend Miss Agnes Baillie, in which I heartily and respectfully join;—to you she offers her best apology for not writing, and hopes for your kind forgiveness. I ought perhaps to make one for taking the task off her hands, but we are both at your mercy; and I am ever your most faithful, obedient, and admiring servant,

'WALTER SCOTT.

'*P.S.*—I have had a visit from the author of the Poor Man's Sabbath, whose affairs with Constable are, I hope, settled to his satisfaction. I got him a few books more than were originally stipulated, and have endeavoured to interest Lord Leven,[1] and through him Mr. Wilberforce, and through them both, the saints in general, in the success of this modest and apparently worthy man. Lord Leven has promised his exertions; and the interest of the party, if exerted, would save a work tenfold inferior in real merit. What think you of Spain? The days of William Wallace and the Cid Ruy Diaz de Bivar seem to be reviving there.'

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[1] Alexander, tenth Earl of Leven, had married a lady of the English family of Thornton, whose munificent charities are familiar to the readers of Cowper's Life and Letters; hence, probably, his Lordship's influence with the party alluded to in the text.

CHAPTER XVIII

Quarrel with Messrs. Constable and Hunter—John Ballantyne established as a Bookseller in Edinburgh—Scott's Literary Projects—The Edinburgh Annual Register, etc.—Meeting of James Ballantyne and John Murray—Murray's visit to Ashestiel—Politics—The Peninsular War—Project of the Quarterly Review—Correspondence with Ellis, Gifford, Morritt, Southey, Sharpe, etc.

1808–1809

THE reader does not need to be reminded that Scott at this time had business enough on his hand, besides combing the mane of Brown Adam, and twisting couples for Douglas and Percy. He was deep in Swift; and the Ballantyne press was groaning under a multitude of works, some of them already mentioned, with almost all of which his hand as well as his head had something, more or less, to do. But a serious change was about to take place in his relations with the spirited publishing house which had hitherto been the most efficient supporters of that press; and his letters begin to be much occupied with differences and disputes which, uninteresting as the details would now be, must have cost him many anxious hours in the apparently idle autumn of 1808. Mr. Constable had then for his partner Mr. Alexander Gibson Hunter, afterwards Laird of Blackness, to whose intemperate language, much more than to any part of Constable's own conduct, Scott ascribed this unfortunate alienation; which, however, as well as most of my friend's subsequent misadventures, I am inclined to trace in no small degree to the influence which a third person, hitherto unnamed, was about this time beginning to exercise over the concerns of James Ballantyne.

John Ballantyne, a younger brother of Scott's schoolfellow, was originally destined for the paternal trade of a *merchant*—(that is to say, a dealer in everything from fine broadcloth to children's tops)—at Kelso. The father seems to have sent him when very young to London, where, whatever else he may have done in the way of professional training, he spent some time in the banking-house of Messrs. Currie. On returning to Kelso, however, the '*department*' which more peculiarly devolved upon him was the tailoring one.[1] His personal habits had not been improved by his brief sojourn in the Great City, and his business, in consequence (by his own statement) of the irregularity of his life, gradually melted to nothing in his hands. Early in 1805, his goods were sold off, and barely sufficed to pay his debts. The worthy old couple found refuge with their ever affectionate eldest son, who provided his father with some little occupation (real or nominal) about the printing-office; and thus John himself again quitted his native place, under circumstances which, as I shall show in the sequel, had left a deep and painful trace even upon that volatile mind.

He had, however, some taste, and he at least fancied himself to have some talent for literature;[2] and the rise of his elder brother, who also had met with no success in his original profession, was before him. He had acquired in London great apparent dexterity in book-keeping and accounts. He was married by this time; and it might naturally be hoped, that with the severe lessons of the past, he would now apply sedulously to any duty that might be intrusted to him. The concern in the Canongate was a growing one, and James Ballantyne's somewhat indolent habits were already severely tried by its multifarious management. The Company offered John a salary of £200 a year as clerk; and the destitute ex-*merchant* was too happy to accept the proposal.[1]

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[1] The first time that William Laidlaw saw John Ballantyne, he had come to Selkirk to measure the troopers of the Yeomanry Cavalry, of whom Laidlaw was one, for new breeches.—[1839.]

[2] John Ballantyne, upon the marvellous success of Waverley, wrote and published a novel, called 'The Widow's Lodgings.' More wretched trash never was.

He was a quick, active, intrepid little fellow; and in society so very lively and amusing, so full of fun and merriment, such a thoroughly light-hearted droll, all-over quaintness and humorous mimicry; and, moreover, such a keen and skilful devotee to all manner of field-sports, from fox-hunting to badger-baiting inclusive, that it was no wonder he should have made a favourable impression on Scott, when he appeared in Edinburgh in this destitute plight, and offered to assist James in book-keeping, which the latter never understood, or could bring himself to attend to with regularity. The contrast between the two brothers was not the least of the amusement; indeed that continued to amuse him to the last. The elder of these is painted to the life in an early letter of Leyden's, which, on the Doctor's death, he, though not (I fancy) without wincing, permitted Scott to print:—'Methinks I see you with your confounded black beard, bull-neck, and upper lip turned up to your nose, while one of your eyebrows is cocked perpendicularly, and the other forms pretty well the base of a right-angled triangle, opening your great gloating eyes, and crying—*But, Leyden!!!*' James was a short, stout, well-made man, and would have been considered a handsome one, but for these grotesque frowns, starts, and twistings of his features, set off by a certain mock majesty of walk and gesture, which he had perhaps contracted from his usual companions, the emperors and tyrants of the stage. His voice in talk was grave and sonorous, and he sung well (theatrically well), in a fine rich bass. John's tone in singing was a sharp treble—in conversation something between a croak and a squeak. Of *his* style of story-telling it is sufficient to say that the late Charles Mathews's 'old Scotch lady' was but an imperfect copy of the original, which the great comedian first heard in my presence from his lips.[1] He was shorter than James, but lean as a scarecrow, and he rather hopped than walked: his features, too, were naturally good, and he twisted them about quite as much, but in a very different fashion. The elder brother was a gourmand—the younger liked his bottle and his bowl, as well as, like Johnny Armstrong, 'a hawk, a hound, and a fair woman.' Scott used to call the one Aldiborontiphoscophornio—the other Rigdumfunnidos. They both entertained him; they both loved and revered him; and I believe would have shed their heart's blood in his service; but they both, as men of affairs, deeply injured him—and above all, the day that brought John into pecuniary connexion with him was the blackest in his calendar. A more reckless, thoughtless, improvident adventurer never rushed into the serious responsibilities of business; but his cleverness, his vivacity, his unaffected zeal, his gay fancy always seeing the light side of every thing, his imperturbable good-humour and buoyant elasticity of spirits, made and kept him such a favourite, that I believe Scott would as soon have ordered his dog to be hanged, as harboured, in his darkest hour of perplexity, the least thought of discarding 'jocund Johnny.'

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[1] The reader, who compares this account of John Ballantyne's early life with that given in the former edition of this work (vol. ii. p. 196), will observe some alterations that I have made—but they are none of them as to points of the very slightest importance. The sketch of John's career, drawn up by himself, shortly before his death, confirms every word I had said as to anything of substantial consequence—and indeed tells the story more unfavourably for *him* than I did—or do. It was printed in vol. v. of the first edition, p. 77; and will be reprinted in its proper place, *sub anno* 1821.—[1839.]

The great bookseller of Edinburgh was a man of calibre infinitely beyond these Ballantynes. Though with a strong dash of the sanguine, without which, indeed, there can be no great projector in any walk of life,

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[1] The reader will find an amusing anecdote of Johnny in the Memoirs of Mathews, by his widow, vol. ii. p. 382.—[1839.]

Archibald Constable was one of the most sagacious persons that ever followed his profession. A brother poet of Scott says to him, a year or two before this time, 'Our butteracious friend at the Cross turns out a deep draw-well'; and another eminent literator, still more closely connected with Constable, had already, I believe, christened him 'The Crafty.' Indeed, his fair and very handsome physiognomy carried a bland astuteness of expression, not to be mistaken by any who could read the plainest of nature's handwriting. He made no pretensions to literature—though he was in fact a tolerable judge of it generally, and particularly well skilled in the department of Scotch antiquities. He distrusted himself, however, in such matters, being conscious that his early education had been very imperfect; and moreover, he wisely considered the business of a critic as quite as much out of his 'proper line' as authorship itself. But of that 'proper line,' and his own qualifications for it, his estimation was ample; and—often as I may have smiled at the lofty serenity of his self-complacence—I confess I now doubt whether he rated himself too highly as a master in the true science of the bookseller. He had, indeed, in his mercantile character, one deep and fatal flaw—for he hated accounts, and systematically refused, during the most vigorous years of his life, to examine or sign a balance-sheet; but for casting a keen eye over the remotest indications of popular taste—for anticipating the chances of success and failure in any given variety of adventure—for the planning and invention of his calling—he was not, in his own day at least, surpassed; and among all his myriad of undertakings, I question if any one that really originated with himself, and continued to be superintended by his own care, ever did fail. He was as bold as far-sighted—and his disposition was as liberal as his views were wide. Had he and Scott from the beginning trusted as thoroughly as they understood each other; had there been no third parties to step in, flattering an overweening vanity on the one hand into presumption, and on the other side spurring the enterprise that wanted nothing but a bridle, I have no doubt their joint career might have been one of unbroken prosperity. But the Ballantynes were jealous of the superior mind, bearing, and authority of Constable: and though he too had a liking for them both personally—esteemed James's literary tact, and was far too much of a humourist not to be very fond of the younger brother's company—he could never away with the feeling that they intervened unnecessarily, and left him but the shadow, where he ought to have had the substantial lion's share, of confidence. On his part, again, he was too proud a man to give entire confidence where that was withheld from himself; and more especially, I can well believe that a frankness of communication as to the real amount of his capital and general engagements of business, which would have been the reverse of painful to him in habitually confidential intercourse with Scott, was out of the question where Scott's proposals and suggestions were to be met in conference, not with his own manly simplicity, but the buckram pomposity of the one, or the burlesque levity of the other, of his plenipotentiaries.

The disputes in question seem to have begun very shortly after the contract for the Life and Edition of Swift had been completed; and we shall presently see reason to infer that Scott to a certain degree was influenced at the moment by a soreness originating in the recent conduct of Mr Jeffrey's Journal — that great primary source of the wealth and authority of the house of Constable. The then comparatively little-known bookseller of London, who was destined to be ultimately Constable's most formidable rival in more than one department of publishing, has told me, that when he read the article on Marmion, and another on general politics, in the same number of the Edinburgh Review, he said to himself—'Walter Scott has feelings both as a gentleman and a Tory, which these people must now have wounded: —the alliance between him and the whole clique of the Edinburgh Review, its proprietor included, is shaken'; and, as far at least as the political part of the affair was concerned, John Murray's sagacity was not at fault. We have seen with what thankful alacrity he accepted a small share in the adventure of Marmion—and with what brilliant success that was crowned; nor is it wonderful that a young bookseller, conscious of ample energies, should now have watched with eagerness the circumstances which seemed not unlikely to place within his own reach a more intimate connexion with the first great living author in whose works he had ever had any direct interest. He forthwith took measures for improving and extending his relations with James Ballantyne, through whom, as he guessed, Scott could best be approached. His tenders of employment for the Canongate press were such, that the apparent head of the firm proposed a conference at Ferrybridge, in Yorkshire; and there Murray, after detailing some of his own literary plans—particularly that already alluded to, of a Novelist's Library—in his turn sounded Ballantyne so far as to resolve at once on pursuing his journey into Scotland. Ballantyne had said enough to satisfy him that the project of setting up a new publishing house in Edinburgh, in opposition to Constable, was already all but matured; and he, on the instant, proposed himself for its active co-operator in the metropolis. The printer proceeded to open his budget further, mentioning, among other things, that the author of Marmion had 'both another Scotch poem and a *Scotch novel* on the stocks'; and had, moreover, chalked out the design of an Edinburgh Annual Register, to be conducted in opposition to the politics and criticism of Constable's Review. These tidings might have been enough to make Murray proceed farther northwards; but there was a scheme of his own which had for some time deeply occupied his mind, and the last article of this communication determined him to embrace the opportunity of opening it in person at Ashestiel. He arrived there about the middle of October. The 26th Number of the Edinburgh Review, containing Mr. Brougham's celebrated article, entitled, 'Don Cevallos, on the usurpation of Spain,' had just been published; and one of the first things Scott mentioned in conversation was, that he had so highly resented the tone of that essay as to give orders that his name might be discontinued on the list of subscribers.[1] Mr. Murray could not have wished better auspices for the matter he had come to open; and, shortly after his departure, Scott writes as follows, to his prime political confidant:—

'*To George Ellis, Esq., Claremont.*

'ASHESTIEL, *Nov. 2nd*, 1808.

'DEAR ELLIS—We had, equally to our joy and surprise, a flying visit from Heber, about three weeks ago. He stayed but three days—but, between old stories and new, we made them very merry in their passage. During his stay, John Murray, the bookseller in Fleet Street, who has more real knowledge of what concerns his business than any of his brethren—at least than any of them that I know—came to canvass a most important plan, of which I am now, in 'dern privacie,' to give you the outline. I had most strongly recommended to our Lord Advocate[2] to think of some counter-measures against the Edinburgh Review, which, politically speaking, is doing incalculable damage. I do not mean this in a mere party view;—the present ministry are not all that I could wish them—for (Canning excepted) I doubt there is among them too much *self-seeking*, as it was called in Cromwell's time; and what is their misfortune, if not their fault, there is not among them one in the decided situation of paramount authority, both with respect to the others and to the Crown, which is, I think, necessary, at least in difficult times, to produce promptitude, regularity, and efficiency in measures of importance. But their political principles are sound English principles, and, compared to the greedy and inefficient horde which preceded them, they are angels of light and of purity. It is obvious, however, that they want defenders both in and out of doors. Pitt's

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[1] 'When the 26th Number appeared, Mr. Scott wrote to Constable in these terms:—"The Edinburgh Review *had* become such as to render it impossible for me to continue a contributor to it.—*Now*, it is such as I can no longer continue to receive or read it.' The list of the then subscribers exhibits in an indignant dash of Constable's pen opposite Mr. Scott's name, the word—"STOPT!!!"'—*Letter from Mr. R. Cadell.*

[2] The Right Hon. John Campbell Colquhoun, husband of Scott's early friend, Mary Anne Erskine.

> . . . Love and fear glued many friends to him ;
> And now he's fallen, those tough commixtures melt.[1]

Were this only to affect a change of hands, I should expect it with more indifference ; but I fear a change of principles is designed. The Edinburgh Review tells you coolly, "We foresee a speedy revolution in this country as well as Mr. Cobbett" ; and, to say the truth, by degrading the person of the Sovereign—exalting the power of the French armies, and the wisdom of their counsels—holding forth that peace (which they allow can only be purchased by the humiliating prostration of our honour) is indispensable to the very existence of this country—I think, that for these two years past, they have done their utmost to hasten the accomplishment of their own prophecy. Of this work 9000 copies are printed quarterly, and no genteel family *can* pretend to be without it, because, independent of its politics, it gives the only valuable literary criticism which can be met with. Consider, of the numbers who read this work, how many are there likely to separate the literature from the politics—how many youths are there, upon whose minds the flashy and bold character of the work is likely to make an indelible impression ; and think what the consequence is likely to be.

'Now, I think there is balm in Gilead for all this ; and that the cure lies in instituting such a Review in London as should be conducted totally independent of bookselling influence, on a plan as liberal as that of the Edinburgh, its literature as well supported, and its principles English and constitutional. Accordingly, I have been given to understand that Mr. William Gifford is willing to become the conductor of such a work, and I have written to him, at the Lord Advocate's desire, a very voluminous letter on the subject. Now, should this plan succeed, you must hang your birding-piece on its hooks, take down your old Anti-jacobin armour, and "remember your swashing blow." It is not that I think this projected Review ought to be exclusively or principally political—this would, in my opinion, absolutely counteract its purpose, which I think should be to offer to those who love their country, and to those whom we would wish to love it, a periodical work of criticism conducted with equal talent, but upon sounder principles than that which has gained so high a station in the world of letters. Is not this very possible? In point of learning, you Englishmen have ten times our scholarship; and as for talent and genius, "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than any of the rivers in Israel?" Have we not yourself and your cousin, the Roses, Malthus, Matthias, Gifford, Heber, and his brother? Can I not procure you a score of blue-caps who would rather write for us than for the Edinburgh Review if they got as much pay by it? "A good plot, good friends, and full of expectation—an excellent plot, very good friends!"[1]

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[1] Slightly altered from 3rd K. Henry VI. Act II. Scene 6.

'Heber's fear was, lest we should fail in procuring regular steady contributors; but I know so much of the interior discipline of reviewing, as to have no apprehension of that. Provided we are once set agoing, by a few dashing numbers, there would be no fear of enlisting regular contributors; but the amateurs must bestir themselves in the first instance. From Government we should be entitled to expect confidential communication as to points of fact (so far as fit to be made public), in our political disquisitions. With this advantage, our good cause and St. George to boot, we may at least divide the field with our formidable competitors, who, after all, are much better at cutting than parrying, and whom uninterrupted triumph has as much unfitted for resisting a serious attack, as it has done Buonaparte for the Spanish war.

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[1] Hotspur—1st K. Henry IV. Act II. Scene 3.

Jeffrey is, to be sure, a man of the most uncommon versatility of talent, but what then?

> General Howe is a gallant commander,
> There are others as gallant as he.

Think of all this, and let me hear from you very soon on the subject. Canning is, I have good reason to know, very anxious about the plan. I mentioned it to Robert Dundas, who was here with his lady for two days on a pilgrimage to Melrose, and he approved highly of it. Though no literary man, he is judicious, *clair-voyant*, and uncommonly sound-headed, like his father, Lord Melville. With the expections I have mentioned, the thing continues a secret.

'I am truly happy you think well of the Spanish business: they have begun in a truly manly and rounded manner, and barring internal dissension, are, I think, very likely to make their part good. Buonaparte's army has come to assume such a very motley description as gives good hope of its crumbling down on the frost of adversity setting in. The Germans and Italians have deserted him in troops, and I greatly doubt his being able to assemble a very huge force at the foot of the Pyrenees, unless he trusts that the terror of his name will be sufficient to keep Germany in subjugation, and Austria in awe. The finances of your old Russian friends are said to be ruined out and out; such is the account we have from Leith.

'Enough of this talk—Ever yours,

'WALTER SCOTT.'

The readiness with which Mr. Ellis entered into the scheme thus introduced to his notice, encouraged Scott to write still more fully; indeed, I might fill half a volume with the correspondence now before me concerning the gradual organization, and ultimately successful establishment of the Quarterly Review. But my only object is to illustrate the liberality and sagacity of Scott's views on such a subject, and the characteristic mixture of strong and playful language in which he developed them; and I conceive that this end will be sufficiently accomplished, by extracting two more letters of this bulky series. Already, as we have seen, before opening the matter even to Ellis, he had been requested to communicate his sentiments to the proposed editor of the work, and he had done so in these terms :—

'*To William Gifford, Esq., London.*

'EDINBURGH, *October* 25, 1808.

'SIR—By a letter from the Lord Advocate of Scotland, in consequence of a communication between his Lordship and Mr. Canning on the subject of a new Review to be attempted in London, I have the pleasure to understand that you have consented to become the editor, a point which, in my opinion, goes no small way to ensure success to the undertaking. In offering a few observations upon the details of such a plan, I only obey the commands of our distinguished friends, without having the vanity to hope that I can point out anything which was not likely to have at once occurred to a person of Mr. Gifford's literary experience and eminence. I shall, however, beg permission to offer you my sentiments, in the miscellaneous way in which they occur to me. The extensive reputation and circulation of the Edinburgh Review is chiefly owing to two circumstances : First, it is entirely uninfluenced by the booksellers, who have contrived to make most of the other Reviews merely advertising sheets to puff off their own publications ; and, secondly, the very handsome recompense which the editor not only holds forth to his regular assistants, but actually forces upon those whose circumstances and rank make it a matter of total indifference to them. The editor, to my knowledge, makes a point of every contributor receiving this *bonus*, saying that Czar Peter, when working in the trenches, received pay as a common soldier. This general rule removes all scruples of delicacy, and fixes in his service a number of persons who might otherwise have felt shy in taking the price of their labours, and even the more so because it was an object of convenience to them. There are many young men of talent and enterprise who are extremely glad of a handsome apology to work for fifteen or twenty guineas, although they would not willingly be considered as hired reviewers. From this I deduce two points of doctrine: first, that the work must be considered as independent of all bookselling influence; secondly, that the labours of the contributors must be regularly and handsomely recompensed, and that it must be a rule that each one shall accept of the price of his labour. John Murray of Fleet Street, a young bookseller of capital and enterprise, and with more good sense and propriety of sentiment than fall to the share of most of the trade, made me a visit at Ashestiel a few weeks ago, and as I found he had had some communication with you upon the subject, I did not hesitate to communicate my sentiments to him on these and some other points of the plan, and I thought his ideas were most liberal and satisfactory.

'The office of the editor is of such importance, that had you not been pleased to undertake it, I fear the plan would have fallen wholly to the ground. The full power of control must, of course, be vested in the editor for selecting, curtailing, and correcting the contributions to the Review. But this is not all; for, as he is the person immediately responsible to the bookseller that the work (amounting to a certain number of pages, more or less) shall be before the public at a certain time, it will be the editor's duty to consider in due time the articles of which each number ought to consist, and to take measures for procuring them from the persons best qualified to write upon such and such subjects. But this is sometimes so troublesome, that I foresee with pleasure you will be soon obliged to abandon your resolution of writing nothing yourself. At the same time, if you will accept of my services as a sort of jackal or lion's provider, I will do all in my power to assist in this troublesome department of editorial duty. But there is still something behind, and that of the last consequence. One great resource to which the Edinburgh editor turns himself, and by which he gives popularity even to the duller articles of his Review, is accepting contributions from persons of inferior powers of writing, provided they understand the books to which the criticisms relate; and as such are often of stupifying mediocrity, he renders them palatable by throwing in a handful of spice—namely, any lively paragraph or entertaining illustration that occurs to him in reading them over. By this sort of veneering, he converts, without loss of time, or hindrance of business, articles which, in their original state, might hang in the market, into such goods as are not likely to disgrace those among which they are placed. This seems to be a point in which an editor's assistance is of the last consequence, for those who possess the knowledge necessary to review books of research or abstruse disquisition, are very often unable to put the criticism into a readable, much more a pleasant and captivating form; and as their science cannot be attained "for the nonce," the only remedy is to supply their deficiencies, and give their lucubrations a more popular turn.

'There is one opportunity possessed by you in a particular degree—that of access to the best sources of political information. It would not, certainly, be advisable that the work should assume, especially at the outset, a professed political character. On the contrary, the articles on science and miscellaneous literature ought to be of such a quality as might fairly challenge competition with the best of our contemporaries. But as the real reason of instituting the publication is the disgusting and deleterious doctrine with which the most popular of our Reviews disgraces its pages, it is essential to consider how this warfare should be managed. On this ground, I hope it is not too much to expect from those who have the power of assisting us, that they should on topics of great national interest furnish the reviewers, through the medium of their editor, with accurate views of points of fact, so far as they are fit to be made public. This is the most delicate, and yet most essential part of our scheme. On the one hand, it is certainly not to be understood that we are to be held down to advocate upon all occasions the cause of administration. Such a dereliction of independence would render us entirely useless for the purpose we mean to serve. On the other hand, nothing will render the work more interesting than the public learning, not from any vaunt of ours, but from their own observation, that we have access to early and accurate information in point of fact. The Edinburgh Review has profited much by the pains which the Opposition party have taken to possess the writers of all the information they could give them on public matters. Let me repeat that you, my dear sir, from enjoying the confidence of Mr. Canning and other persons in power, may easily obtain the confidential information necessary to give credit to the work, and communicate it to such as you may think proper to employ in laying it before the public.

'Concerning the mode and time of publication, I think you will be of opinion that monthly, in the present dearth of good subjects of Review, would be too often, and that a quarterly publication would both give you less trouble, and be amply sufficient for discussing all that is likely to be worth discussion. The name to be assumed is of some consequence, though any one of little pretension will do. We might, for example, revive the "English Review," which was the name of Gilbert Stuart's.[1] Regular correspondents ought to be sought after; but I should be little afraid of finding such, were the reputation of the Review once decidedly established by three or four numbers of the very first order. As it would be essential to come on the public by surprise, that no unreasonable expectation or artificial misrepresentation might prejudice its success, the authors employed in the first number ought to be few and of the first rate. The choosing of subjects would also be a matter of anxious consideration: for example, a good and distinct essay on Spanish affairs would be sufficient to give a character to the work. The lucubrations of the Edinburgh Review, on that subject, have done the work great injury with the public; and I am convinced, that of the many thousands of copies now distributed of each Number, the quantity might be reduced one-half at least, by any work appearing, which, with the same literary talent and independent character, should speak a political language more familiar to the British ear than that of subjugation to France. At the same time, as I before hinted, it will be necessary to maintain the respect of the public by impartial disquisition; and I would not have it said, as may usually be predicated of other Reviews, that the sentiments of the critic were less determined by the value of the work than by the purpose it was written to serve. If a weak brother will unadvisedly put forth his hand to support even the ark of the constitution, I would expose his arguments, though I might approve of his intention and of his conclusions. I should think an open and express declaration of political tenets, or of opposition to works of a contrary tendency, ought for the same reason to be avoided. I think, from the little observation I have made, that the Whigs suffer most deeply from cool sarcastic reasoning and occasional ridicule. Having long had a sort of command of the press, from the neglect of all literary assistance on the part of those who thought their good cause should fight its own battle, they are apt to feel with great acuteness any assault in that quarter; and having been long accustomed to push, have in some degree lost the power to parry. It will not, therefore, be long before they make some violent retort, and I should not be surprised if it were to come through the Edinburgh Review. We might then come into close combat with a much better grace than if we had thrown down a formal defiance. I am, therefore, for going into a state of hostility without any formal declaration of war. Let our forces for a number or two consist of volunteers and amateurs, and when we have acquired some reputation, we shall soon levy and discipline forces of the line.

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[1] 'The English Review' was started in January 1783, under the auspices of the elder Mr. John Murray of Fleet Street. It had Dr. G. Stuart for Editor, and ranked among its contributors Whittaker the historian of Manchester, Dr. William Thomson, etc., etc.

'After all, the matter is become very serious,—eight or nine thousand copies of the Edinburgh Review are regularly distributed, merely because there is no other respectable and independent publication of the kind. In this city, where there is not one Whig out of twenty men who read the work, many hundreds are sold; and how long the generality of readers will continue to dislike politics, so artfully mingled with information and amusement, is worthy of deep consideration. But it is not yet too late to stand in the breach; the first number ought, if possible, to be out in January, and if it can burst among them like a bomb, without previous notice, the effect will be more striking. Of those who might be intrusted in the first instance, you are a much better judge than I am. I think I can command the assistance of a friend or two here, particularly William Erskine, the Lord Advocate's brother-in-law and my most intimate friend. In London you have Malthus, George Ellis, the Roses, *cum pluribus aliis.* Richard Heber was with me when Murray came to my farm, and knowing his zeal for the good cause, I let him into our counsels. In Mr. Frere we have the hopes of a potent ally. The Rev. Reginald Heber would be an excellent coadjutor, and when I come to town I will sound Matthias. As strict secrecy would of course be observed, the diffidence of many might be overcome;—for scholars you can be at no loss while Oxford stands where it did,—and I think there will be no deficiency in the scientific articles.

'Once more I have to apologise for intruding on you this hasty, and therefore long, and probably confused letter; I trust your goodness will excuse my expressing any apology for submitting to your better judgment my sentiments on a plan of such consequence. I expect to be called to London early in the winter, perhaps next month. If you see Murray, as I suppose you will, I presume you will communicate to him such of my sentiments as have the good fortune to coincide with yours. Among the works in the first Number, Fox's history, Grattan's speeches, a notable subject for a quizzing article, and any tract or pamphlet that will give an opportunity to treat of the Spanish affairs, would be desirable subjects of criticism.—I am, with great respect, sir, your most obedient servant,

'WALTER SCOTT.'

On the 18th of November, Scott enclosed to Mr.

Ellis 'the rough scroll' (that now transcribed) of his letter to Mr. Gifford;—'this being,' he says, 'one of the very few epistles of which I thought it will be as well to retain a copy.' He then proceeds as follows:—'Supposing you to have read said scroll, you must know further, that it has been received in a most favourable manner by Mr. Gifford, who approves of its contents in all respects, and that Mr. Canning has looked it over, and promised such aid as is therein required. I therefore wish you to be apprised fully of what could hardly be made the subject of writing, unless in all the confidence of friendship. Let me touch a string of much delicacy—the political character of the Review. It appears to me that this should be of a liberal and enlarged nature, resting upon principles—indulgent and conciliatory as far as possible upon mere party questions—but stern in detecting and exposing all attempts to sap our constitutional fabric. Religion is another slippery station; here also I would endeavour to be as impartial as the subject will admit of. This character of impartiality, as well as the maintenance of a high reputation in literature, is of as great consequence to such of our friends as are in the Ministry, as our more direct efforts in their favour; for these will only be successful in proportion to the influence we shall acquire by an extensive circulation; to procure which, the former qualities will be essentially necessary. Now, *entre nous*, will not our editor be occasionally a little warm and pepperish?—essential qualities in themselves, but which should not quite constitute the leading character of such a publication. This is worthy of a *memento*.

'As our start is of such immense consequence, don't you think Mr. Canning, though unquestionably our Atlas, might for a day find a Hercules on whom to devolve the burthen of the globe, while he writes us a review? I know what an audacious request this is; but suppose he should, as great statesmen sometimes do, take a political fit of the gout, and absent himself from a large ministerial dinner, which might give it him in good earnest,—dine at three on a chicken and pint of wine,—and lay the foundation at least of one good article? Let us but once get afloat, and our labour is not worth talking of; but, till then, all hands must work hard.

'Is it necessary to say that I agree entirely with you in the mode of treating even delinquents? The truth is, there is policy, as well as morality, in keeping our swords clear as well as sharp, and not forgetting the gentlemen in the critics. The public appetite is soon gorged with any particular style. The common Reviews, before the appearance of the Edinburgh, had become extremely mawkish; and, unless when prompted by the malice of the bookseller or reviewer, gave a dawdling, maudlin sort of applause to everything that reached even mediocrity. The Edinburgh folks squeezed into their sauce plenty of acid, and were popular from novelty as well as from merit. The minor Reviews and other periodical publications, have *outrèd* the matter still further, and given us all abuse, and no talent. But by the time the language of vituperative criticism becomes general—(which is now pretty nearly the case)—it affects the tympanum of the public ear no more than *rogue* or *rascal* from the cage of a parrot, or *blood-and-wounds* from a horse-barrack. This, therefore, we have to trust to, that decent, lively, and reflecting criticism, teaching men not to abuse books only, but to read and to judge them, will have the effect of novelty upon a public wearied with universal efforts at blackguard and indiscriminating satire. I have a long and very sensible letter from John Murray the bookseller, in which he touches upon this point very neatly. By the by, little Weber may be very useful upon antiquarian subjects, in the way of collecting information and making remarks; only, you or I must re-write his lucubrations. I use him often as a pair of eyes in consulting books and collating, and as a pair of hands in making extracts. Constable, the great Edinburgh editor, has offended me excessively by tyrannizing over this poor Teutcher, and being rather rude when I interfered. It is a chance but I may teach him that he should not kick down the scaffolding before his house is quite built. Another bomb is about to break on him besides the Review. This is an Edinburgh Annual Register, to be conducted under the auspices of James Ballantyne, who is himself no despicable composer, and has secured excellent assistance. I cannot help him, of course, very far, but I will certainly lend him a lift as an adviser. I want all my friends to befriend this work, and will send you a *prospectus* when it is published. It will be *valde* anti-Foxite. This is a secret for the present.

'For heaven's sake do not fail to hold a meeting as soon as you can. Gifford will be admirable at service, but will require, or I mistake him much, both a spur and a bridle—a spur on account of habits of literary indolence induced by weak health—and a bridle because, having renounced in some degree general society, he cannot be supposed to have the habitual and instinctive feeling enabling him to judge at once and decidedly on the mode of letting his shafts fly down the breeze of popular opinion. But he has worth, wit, learning, and extensive information; is the friend of our friends in power, and can easily correspond with them; is in no danger of having private quarrels fixed on him for public criticism; nor very likely to be embarrassed by being thrown into action in public life alongside of the very people he has reviewed, and probably offended. All this is of the last importance to the discharge of his arduous duty. It would be cruel to add a word to this merciless epistle, excepting love to Mrs. Ellis and all friends. Leyden, by the by, is triumphant at Calcutta—a *Judge*, of all things!—and making money! He has flourished like a green bay tree under the auspices of Lord Minto, his countryman.—Ever yours,

'WALTER SCOTT.'

Among others whom Scott endeavoured to enlist in the service of the new Review was his brother Thomas, who, on the breaking up of his affairs in Edinburgh, had retired to the Isle of Man, and who shortly afterwards obtained the office in which he died, that of paymaster to the 70th regiment. The poet had a high opinion of his brother's literary talents, and thought that his knowledge of our ancient dramatists, and his vein of comic narration, might render him a very useful recruit. He thus communicates his views to Thomas Scott, on the 19th November, and, as might be expected, the communication is fuller and franker than any other on the subject :—

'*To Thomas Scott, Esq., Douglas, Isle of Man.*

'DEAR TOM—Owing to certain pressing business, I have not yet had time to complete my collection of Shadwell[1] for you, though it is now nearly ready.—I wish you to have all the originals to collate with the edition in 8vo. But I have a more pressing employment for your pen, and to which I think it particularly suited. You are to be informed, but under the seal of the strictest secrecy, that a plot has been long hatching by the gentlemen who were active in the Anti-Jacobin paper, to countermine the Edinburgh Review, by establishing one which should display similar talent and independence, with a better strain of politics. The management of this work was much pressed upon me ;[2] but though great prospects of emolument were held out, I declined so arduous a task, and it has devolved upon Mr. Gifford, author of the Baviad, with whose wit and learning you are well acquainted. He made it a stipulation, however, that I should give all the assistance in my power, especially at the commencement ; to which I am, for many reasons, nothing loth. Now, as I know no one who possesses more power of humour or perception of the ridiculous than yourself, I think your leisure hours might be most pleasantly passed in this way. Novels, light poetry, and quizzical books of all kinds, might be sent you by the packet ; you glide back your reviews in the same way, and touch, upon the publication of the number (quarterly), ten guineas per printed sheet of sixteen pages. If you are shy of communicating directly with Gifford, you may, for some time at least, send your communications through me, and I will revise them. We want the matter to be a *profound secret* till the first number is out. If you agree to try your skill I will send you a novel or two. You must understand, as Gadshill tells the Chamberlain, that you are to be leagued with "Trojans that thou dreamest not of, the which for sport sake are content to do the profession some grace";[1] and thus far I assure you, that if by paying attention to your style and subject you can distinguish yourself creditably, it may prove a means of finding you powerful friends were anything opening in your island. Constable, or rather that Bear his partner, has behaved to me of late not very civilly, and I owe Jeffrey a flap with a fox-tail on account of his review of Marmion, and thus doth "the whirligig of time bring about my revenges."[2] The late articles on Spain have given general disgust, and many have given up the Edinburgh Review on account of them.

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[1] Mr. T. Scott had meditated an edition of Shadwell's plays,—which, by the way, his brother considered as by no means meriting the utter neglect into which they have fallen, chiefly in consequence of Dryden's satire.

[2] This circumstance was not revealed to Mr. Murray. I presume, therefore, the invitation to Scott must have proceeded from Mr. Canning.

'My mother holds out very well, and talks of writing by this packet. Her cask of herrings, as well as ours, red and white, have arrived safe, and prove most excellent. We have been both dining and supping upon them with great gusto, and are much obliged by your kindness in remembering us.—Yours affectionately, W. S.'

I suspect, notwithstanding the opinion to the contrary expressed in the following extract, that the preparations for the new journal did not long escape the notice of either the editor or the publishers of the Edinburgh Review. On receiving the celebrated *Declaration of Westminster* on the subject of the Spanish war, which bears date the 15th December 1808, Scott says to Ellis—'I cannot help writing a few lines to congratulate you on the royal declaration. I suspect by this time the author is at Claremont,[1] for, if I mistake not egregiously, this spirited composition, as we say in Scotland, fathers itself in the manliness of its style. It has appeared, too, at a most fortunate time, when neither friend nor foe can impute it to temporary motives. Tell Mr. Canning that the old women of Scotland will defend the country with their distaffs, rather than that troops enough be not sent to make good so noble a pledge. Were the thousands that have mouldered away in petty conquests or Liliputian expeditions united to those we now have in that country, what a band would Moore have under him! . . . Jeffrey has offered terms of pacification, engaging that no party politics should again appear in his Review. I told him I thought it was now too late, and reminded him that I had often pointed out to him the consequences of letting his work become a party tool. He said "he did not care for the consequences—there were but four men he feared as opponents."—"Who were these?"—"Yourself for one."—"Certainly you pay me a great compliment; depend upon it I will endeavour to deserve it."—"Why, you would not join against me?"—"Yes I would, if I saw a proper opportunity: not against you personally, but against your politics."—"You are privileged to be violent."—"I don't ask any privilege for undue violence. But who are your other foemen?"—"George Ellis and Southey." The fourth he did not name. All this was in great good-humour; and next day I had a very affecting note from him, in answer to an invitation to dinner. He has no suspicion of the Review whatever; but I thought I could not handsomely suffer him to infer that I would be influenced by those private feelings respecting *him*, which, on more than one occasion, he has laid aside when I was personally concerned.'

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[1] 1st K. Henry IV. Act II. Scene 1.

[2] Twelfth Night, Act V. Scene 1.

As to Messrs. Constable and Co., it is not to be supposed that the rumours of the rival journal would tend to soothe those disagreeable feelings between them and Scott, of which I can trace the existence several months beyond the date of Mr. Murray's arrival at Ashestiel. Something seems to have occurred before the end of 1808 which induced Scott to suspect, that among other sources of uneasiness had been a repentant grudge in the minds of those booksellers as to their bargain about the new edition of Swift; and on the 2nd of January 1809, I find him requesting, that if, on reflection, they thought they had hastily committed themselves, the deed might be forthwith cancelled. On the 11th of the same month, Messrs. Constable reply as follows:—

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[1] Scott's friend had mentioned that his cousin (now Lord Seaford) expected a visit from Mr. Canning, at Claremont, in Surrey; which beautiful seat continued in the possession of the Ellis family, until it was purchased by the crown, on the marriage of the Princess Charlotte of Wales, in 1816.

'*To Walter Scott*, *Esq*.

'SIR—We are anxious to assure you that we feel no dissatisfaction at any part of our bargain about Swift. Viewing it as a safe and respectable speculation, we should be very sorry to agree to your relinquishing the undertaking, and indeed rely with confidence on its proceeding as originally arranged. We regret that you have not been more willing to overlook the unguarded expression of our Mr. Hunter about which you complain. We are very much concerned that any circumstance should have occurred that should thus interrupt our friendly intercourse; but as we are not willing to believe that we have done anything which should prevent our being again friends, we may at least be permitted to express a hope that matters may hereafter be restored to their old footing between us, when the misrepresentations of interested persons may cease to be remembered. At any rate, you will always find us, what we trust we have ever been, sir, your faithful servants, A. CONSTABLE & Co.'

Scott answers :

'*To Messrs. Constable & Co.*

'Edinburgh, 12*th January* 1809.

'Gentlemen—To resume, for the last time, the disagreeable subject of our difference, I must remind you of what I told Mr. Constable personally, that no *single unguarded expression*, much less the misrepresentation of any person whatever, would have influenced me to quarrel with any of my friends. But if Mr. Hunter will take the trouble to recollect the general opinion he has expressed of my undertakings, and of my ability to execute them, upon many occasions during the last five months, and his whole conduct in the bargain about Swift, I think he ought to be the last to wish his interest compromised on my account. I am only happy the breach has taken place before there was any real loss to complain of, for although I have had my share of popularity, I cannot expect it to be more lasting than that of those who have lost it after deserving it much better.

'In the present circumstances, I have only a parting favour to request of your house, which is, that the portrait for which I sat to Raeburn shall be considered as done at my debit, and for myself. It shall be of course forthcoming for the fulfilment of any engagement you may have made about engraving, if such exists. Sadler will now be soon out, when we will have a settlement of our accounts.—I am, gentlemen, your obedient servant,

'Walter Scott.'

Mr. Constable declined, in very handsome terms, to give up the picture. But for the present the breach was complete. Among other negotiations which Scott had patronised twelve months before, was one concerning the publication of Miss Seward's Poems. On the 19th of March 1809, he writes as follows to that lady :—'Constable, like many other folks who learn to undervalue the means by which they have risen, has behaved, or rather suffered his partner to behave, very uncivilly towards me. But they may both live to know that they should not have kicked down the ladder till they were sure of their footing. The very last time I spoke to him on business was about your poems, which he promised faithfully to write about. I understood him to decline your terms, in which he acted wrong; but I had neither influence to change his opinion, nor inclination to interfere with his resolution. He is a very enterprising, and, I believe, a thoroughly honest man, but his vanity in some cases overpowers his discretion.'

One word as to the harsh language in which Constable's then partner is mentioned in several of the preceding letters. This Mr. Hunter was, I am told by friends of mine who knew him well, a man of considerable intelligence and accomplishments, to whose personal connexions and weight in society the house of Constable and Co. owed a great accession of business and influence. He was, however, a very keen politician; regarded Scott's Toryism with a fixed bitterness; and, moreover, could never conceal his impression that Scott ought to have embarked in no other literary undertakings whatever, until he had completed his edition of Swift. It is not wonderful that, not having been bred regularly to the bookselling business, he should have somewhat misapprehended the obligation which Scott had incurred when the bargain for that work was made; and his feeling of his own station and consequence was no doubt such as to give his style of conversation, on doubtful questions of business, a tone for which Scott had not been prepared by his previous intercourse with Mr. Constable. The defection of the poet was, however, at once regretted and resented by both these partners; and Constable, I am told, often vented his wrath in figures as lofty as Scott's own. 'Ay,' he would say, stamping on the ground with a savage smile, 'Ay, there is such a thing as rearing the oak until it can support itself.'

All this leads us to the second stage, one still more unwise and unfortunate than the first, in the history of Scott's commercial connexion with the Ballantynes. The scheme of starting a new bookselling house in Edinburgh, begun in the shortsighted heat of pique, had now been matured ;—I cannot add, either with composed observation or rational forecast—for it was ultimately settled that the ostensible and chief managing partner should be a person without capital, and neither by training nor by temper in the smallest degree qualified for such a situation ; more especially where the field was to be taken against long experience, consummate skill, and resources which, if not so large as all the world supposed them, were still in comparison vast, and admirably organized. The rash resolution was, however, carried into effect, and a deed, deposited, for secrecy's sake, in the hands of Scott, laid the foundation of the firm of 'John Ballantyne and Co., booksellers, Edinburgh.' Scott appears to have supplied all the capital, at any rate his own *one-half* share, and *one-fourth*, the portion of James, who, not having any funds to spare, must have become indebted to some one for it. It does not appear from what source John acquired his, the remaining *fourth ;* but *Rigdumfunnidos* was thus installed in Hanover Street as the avowed rival of 'The Crafty.'

The existing bond of copartnership is dated in July 1809 ; but I suspect this had been a revised edition. It is certain that the new house were openly mustering their forces some weeks before Scott desired to withdraw his Swift from the hands of the old one in January. This appears from several of the letters that passed between him and Ellis while Gifford was arranging the materials for the first number of the Quarterly Review, and also between him and his friend Southey, to whom, perhaps, more than any other single writer, that journal owed its ultimate success.

To Ellis, for example, he says, on the 13th of December 1808—'Now let me call your earnest attention to another literary undertaking, which is, in fact, a subsidiary branch of the same grand plan. I transmit the *prospectus* of an Edinburgh Annual Register. I have many reasons for favouring this work as much as I possibly can. In the first place, there is nothing even barely tolerable of this nature, though so obviously necessary to future history. Secondly, Constable was on the point of arranging one on the footing of the Edinburgh Review, and subsidiary thereunto,—a plan which has been totally disconcerted by our occupying the vantage-ground. Thirdly, this work will be very well managed. The two Mackenzies,[1] William Erskine, *cum plurimis aliis*, are engaged in the literary department, and that of science is conducted by Professor Leslie, a great philosopher, and as abominable an animal as I ever saw. He writes, however, with great eloquence, and is an enthusiast in mathematical, chemical, and mineralogical pursuits. I hope to draw upon you in this matter, particularly in the historical department, to which your critical labours will naturally turn your attention. You will ask what I propose to do myself. In fact, though something will be expected I cannot propose to be very active unless the Swift is abandoned, of which I think there is some prospect, as I have reason to complain of very indifferent usage, not indeed from Constable, who is reduced to utter despair by the circumstance, but from the stupid impertinence of his partner, a sort of Whig run mad. I have some reason to believe that Ballantyne, whose stock is now immensely increased, and who is likely to enlarge it by marriage, will commence publisher. Constable threatened him with withdrawing his business from him as a printer on account of his being a Constitutionalist. He will probably by this false step establish a formidable rival in his own line of publishing, which will be most just retribution. I intend to fortify Ballantyne by promising him my continued friendship, which I hope may be of material service to him. He is much liked by the literary people here; has a liberal spirit, and understanding business very completely, with a good general idea of literature, I think he stands fair for success.

'But, Oh! Ellis, these cursed, double cursed news, have sunk my spirits so much, that I am almost at disbelieving a Providence. God forgive me! But I think some evil demon has been permitted, in the shape of this tyrannical monster whom God has sent on the nations visited in his anger. I am confident he is proof against lead and steel, and have only hopes that he may be shot with a silver bullet,[1] or drowned in the torrents of blood which he delights to shed. Oh for True Thomas and Lord Soulis's cauldron![2] Adieu, my dear Ellis. God bless you!—I have been these three days writing this by snatches.'

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[1] The Man of Feeling, and Colin Mackenzie of Portmore.

The 'cursed news' here alluded to were those of Napoleon's advance by Somosierra, after the dispersion of the armies of Blake and Castaños. On the 23rd of the same month, when the Treason of Morla and the fall of Madrid were known in Edinburgh, he thus resumes:—(Probably while he wrote, some cause with which he was not concerned was occupying the Court of Session:)—

'DEAR ELLIS—I have nothing better to do but to vent my groans. I cannot but feel exceedingly low. I distrust what we call thoroughbred soldiers terribly, when anything like the formation of extensive plans, of the daring and critical nature which seems necessary for the emancipation of Spain, is required from them. Our army is a poor school for genius—for the qualities which naturally and deservedly attract the applause of our generals, are necessarily exercised upon a small scale. I would to God Wellesley were now at the head of the English in Spain. His late examination shows his acute and decisive talents for command;[3] and although I believe in my conscience, that when he found himself superseded, he suffered the pigs to run through the business, when he might in some measure have prevented them—

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[1] See note, 'Proof against shot given by Satan.'—*Waverley Novels*, vol. x. p. 40.

[2] On a circle of stones they placed the pot,
   On a circle of stones but barely nine;
They heated it red and fiery hot,
   Till the burnish'd brass did glimmer and shine.
They roll'd him up in a sheet of lead,
   A sheet of lead for a funeral pall;
They plunged him in the cauldron red,
   And melted him, lead, and bones and all.

See the Ballad of *Lord Soulis*, and notes, *Border Minstrelsy*, vol. iv. pp. 235-266.

[3] This refers to Sir Arthur Wellesley's evidence before the Court of Inquiry into the circumstances which led to the Convention (miscalled) of Cintra. For the best answer to the then popular suspicion,

> Yet give the haughty devil his due,
> Though bold his quarterings, they are true.

Such a man, with an army of 40,000 or 50,000 British, with the remains of the Gallician army, and the additional forces which every village would furnish in case of success, might possess himself of Burgos, open a communication with Arragon, and even Navarre, and place Buonaparte in the precarious situation of a general with 100,000 enemies between him and his supplies;—for I presume neither Castaños nor Palafox are so broken as to be altogether disembodied. But a general who is always looking over his shoulder, and more intent on saving his own army than on doing the service on which he is sent, will hardly, I fear, be found capable of forming or executing a plan which its very daring character might render successful. What would we think of an admiral who should bring back his fleet and tell us old Keppel's story of a lee-shore, and the risk of his Majesty's vessels? Our sailors have learned that his Majesty's ships were built to be stranded, or burnt, or sunk, or at least to encounter the risk of these contingencies, when his service requires it; and I heartily wish our generals would learn to play for the gammon, and not to sit down contented with a mere saving game. What, however, can we say of Moore, or how judge of his actions, since the Supreme Junta have shown themselves so miserably incapable of the arduous exertions expected from them? Yet, like Pistol, they spoke bold words at the bridge too,[1] and I admired their firmness in declaring O'Farrel, and the rest of the

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which Scott seems to have partaken, as to the conduct of Sir Arthur when superseded in the moment of victory at Vimiero, I refer to the contemporary despatches lately published in Colonel Gurwood's invaluable compilation.

[1] K. Henry V. Act IV. Scene 4.

Frenchified Spaniards, traitors. But they may have Roman pride, and want Roman talent to support it; and in short, unless God Almighty should raise among them one of those extraordinary geniuses who seem to be created for the emergencies of an oppressed people, I confess I still incline to despondence. If Canning could send a portion of his own spirit with the generals he sends forth, my hope would be high indeed. The proclamation was truly gallant.

'As to the Annual Register, I do agree that the Prospectus is in too stately a tone—yet I question if a purer piece of composition would have attracted the necessary attention. We must sound a trumpet before we open a show. You will say we have added a tambourin; but the mob will the more readily stop and gaze; nor would their ears be so much struck by a sonata from Viotti. Do you know the Review begins to get wind here? An Edinburgh bookseller asked me to recommend him for the sale here, and said he heard it confidentially from London.—Ever yours, W. S.'

I may also introduce here a letter of about the same date, and referring chiefly to the same subjects, addressed by Scott to his friend, Mr. Charles Sharpe,[1] then at Oxford. The allusion at the beginning is to a drawing of Queen Elizabeth, as seen 'dancing high and disposedly,' in her private chamber, by the Scotch ambassador, Sir James Melville, whose description of the exhibition is one of the most amusing things in his Memoirs. This production of Mr. Sharpe's pencil, and the delight with which Scott used to expatiate on its merits, must be well remembered by every one that ever visited the poet at Abbotsford.—Some of the names mentioned in this letter as counted on by the projectors of the Quarterly Review will, no doubt, amuse the reader.

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[1] Scott's acquaintance with Mr. Sharpe began when the latter was very young. He supplied Scott, when compiling the Minstrelsy, with the ballad of the 'Tower of Repentance,' etc. See vol. iv. pp. 307-323.

'*To Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, Esq., Christ Church, Oxford.*

'EDINBURGH, 30*th December* 1808.

'MY DEAR SHARPE—The inimitable virago came safe, and was welcomed by the inextinguishable laughter of all who looked upon her caprioles. I was unfortunately out of town for a few days, which prevented me from acknowledging instantly what gave me so much pleasure, both on account of its intrinsic value, and as a mark of your kind remembrance. You have, I assure you, been upmost in my thoughts for some time past, as I have a serious design on your literary talents, which I am very anxious to engage in one or both of the two following schemes. *Imprimis*, it has been long the decided resolution of Mr. Canning and some of his literary friends, particularly Geo. Ellis, Malthus, Frere, W. Rose, etc., that something of an independent Review ought to be started in London. This plan is now on the point of being executed, after much consultation. I have strongly advised that politics be avoided, unless in cases of great national import, and that their tone be then moderate and manly; but the general tone of the publication is to be literary. William Gifford is editor, and I have promised to endeavour to recruit for him a few spirited young men able and willing to assist in such an undertaking. I confess you were chiefly in my thoughts when I made this promise; but it is a subject which for a thousand reasons I would rather have talked over than written about—among others more prominent I may reckon my great abhorrence of pen and ink, for writing has been so long a matter of duty with me, that it is become as utterly abominable to me as matters of duty usually are. Let me entreat you, therefore, to lay hold of Macneill,[1] or any other new book you like, and give us a good hacking review of it. I retain so much the old habit of a barrister, that I cannot help adding, the fee is ten guineas a sheet, which may serve to buy an odd book now and then—as good play for nothing, you know, as work for nothing; but besides this, your exertions in this cause, if you shall choose to make any, will make you more intimately acquainted with a very pleasant literary coterie than introductions of a more formal kind; and if you happen to know George Ellis already, you must, I am sure, be pleased to take any trouble likely to produce an intimacy between you. The Hebers are also engaged, *item* Rogers, Southey, Moore (Anacreon), and others whose reputations Jeffrey has murdered, and who are rising to cry woe upon him, like the ghosts in King Richard; for your acute and perspicacious judgment must ere this have led you to suspect that this same new Review, which by the way is to be called "the Quarterly," is intended as a rival to the Edinburgh; and if it contains criticism not very inferior in point of talent, with the same independence of booksellers' influence (which has ruined all the English Reviews), I do not see why it should not divide with it the public favour. Observe carefully, this plan is altogether distinct from one which has been proposed by the veteran Cumberland, to which is annexed the extraordinary proposal that each contributor shall place his name before his article, a stipulation which must prove fatal to the undertaking. If I did not think this likely to be a very well-managed business, I would not recommend it to your consideration; but you see I am engaged with no "foot land-rakers, no long-staff sixpenny strikers, but with nobility and tranquillity, burgomasters, and great oneyers," and so forth.[1]

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[1] 'The Pastoral, or Lyric Muse of Scotland; in three Cantos,' 4to, by Hector Macneill, appeared in Dec. 1808.

'The other plan refers to the enclosed prospectus, and has long been a favourite scheme of mine, of William Erskine's, and some of my other cronies here. Mr. Ballantyne, the editor, only undertakes for the inferior departments of the work, and for keeping the whole matter in train. We are most anxious to have respectable contributors, and the smallest donation in any department, poetry, antiquities, etc. etc., will be most thankfully accepted and registered. But the historical department is that in which I would chiefly wish to see you engaged. A lively luminous picture of the events of the last momentous year, is a task for the pen of a man of genius; as for materials, I could procure you access to many of a valuable kind. The appointments of our historian are £300 a year —no deaf nuts. Another person[1] has been proposed, and written to, but I cannot any longer delay submitting the thing to your consideration. Of course, you are to rely on every assistance that can be afforded by your humble comdumble, as Swift says. I hope the great man will give us his answer shortly—and if his be negative, pray let yours be positive. Our politics we would wish to be constitutional, but not party. You see, my good friend, what it is to show your good parts before unquestionable judges.

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[1] Gadshill—1st K. Henry IV. Act II. Scene 1.

'I am forced to conclude abruptly. Thine entirely,

'W. Scott.'

Mr. Morritt was by this time beginning to correspond with the poet pretty frequently. The first of their letters, however, that serves to throw light on Scott's personal proceedings, is the following:—

'*To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., Rokeby Park,*
Yorkshire.

'Edinburgh, 14*th January* 1809.

'My dear Sir—For a long while I thought my summons to London would have been immediate, and that I should have had the pleasure to wait upon you at Rokeby Park in my way to town. But, after due consideration, the commissioners on our Scottish reform of judicial proceedings resolved to begin their sittings at Edinburgh, and have been in full activity ever since last St. Andrew's day. You are not ignorant that in business of this nature, very much of the detail, and of preparing the materials for the various meetings, necessarily devolves upon the clerk, and I cannot say but that my time has been fully occupied.

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[1] Mr. Southey—who finally undertook the task proposed to him.

'Meanwhile, however, I have been concocting, at the instigation of various loyal and well-disposed persons, a grand scheme of opposition to the proud critics of Edinburgh. It is now matured in all its branches, and consists of the following divisions. A new review in London, to be called the Quarterly, William Gifford to be the editor; George Ellis, Rose, Mr. Canning if possible, Frere, and all the ancient Anti-Jacobins, to be concerned. The first number is now in hand, and the allies, I hope and trust, securely united to each other. I have promised to get them such assistance as I can, and most happy should I be to prevail upon you to put your hand to the ark. You can so easily run off an article either of learning or of fun, that it would be inexcusable not to afford us your assistance. Then, sir, to turn the flank of Messrs. Constable and Co., and to avenge myself of certain impertinences which, in the vehemence of their Whiggery, they have dared to indulge in towards me, I have prepared to start against them at Whitsunday first the celebrated printer, Ballantyne (who had the honour of meeting you at Ashestiel), in the shape of an Edinburgh publisher, with a long purse[1] and a sound political creed, not to mention an alliance offensive and defensive with young John Murray of Fleet Street, the most enlightened and active of the London trade. By this means I hope to counterbalance the predominating influence of Constable and Co., who at present have it in their power and inclination to forward or suppress any book as they approve or dislike its political tendency. Lastly, I have caused the said Ballantyne to venture upon an Edinburgh Annual Register, of which I send you a prospectus. I intend to help him myself as far as time will admit, and hope to procure him many respectable coadjutors.

'My own motions southwards remain undetermined, but I conceive I may get to town about the beginning of March, when I expect to find you *en famille* in Portland accepted and registered. But the historical department is that in which I would chiefly wish to see you engaged. A lively luminous picture of the events of the last momentous year, is a task for the pen of a man of genius; as for materials, I could procure you access to many of a valuable kind. The appointments of our historian are £300 a year—no deaf nuts. Another person[1] has been proposed, and written to, but I cannot any longer delay submitting the thing to your consideration. Of course, you are to rely on every assistance that can be afforded by your humble comdumble, as Swift says. I hope the great man will give us his answer shortly—and if his be negative, pray let yours be positive. Our politics we would wish to be constitutional, but not party. You see, my good friend, what it is to show your good parts before unquestionable judges.

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[1] The purse was, alas! Scott's own. Between May 1805 and the end of 1810, he invested cash to the extent of *at least* £9000 in the Ballantyne companies!

'I am forced to conclude abruptly. Thine entirely,

'W. SCOTT.'

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'EDINBURGH, 14*th January* 1809.

'MY DEAR SIR—For a long while I thought my summons to London would have been immediate, and that I should have had the pleasure to wait upon you at Rokeby Park in my way to town. But, after due consideration, the commissioners on our Scottish reform of judicial proceedings resolved to begin their sittings at Edinburgh, and have been in full activity ever since last St. Andrew's day. You are not ignorant that in business of this nature, very much of the detail, and of preparing the materials for the various meetings, necessarily devolves upon the clerk, and I cannot say but that my time has been fully occupied.

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[1] Mr. Southey—who finally undertook the task proposed to him.

nation to my own heart's content, being, as the title-page informs me, *bellicosi et equestres*, like our old Border lads. Should you think of coming hither, which perhaps might be the means of procuring you more information than I can make you aware of, I bespeak you for my guest. I can give you a little chamber in the wall, and you shall go out and in as quietly and freely as your heart can desire, without a human creature saying "why doest thou so?" Thalaba is in parturition too, and you should in decent curiosity give an eye after him. Yet I will endeavour to recover the other books (now lent out), and send them to you in the same way as Dob. travels, unless you recommend another conveyance. But I expect this generosity on my part will rather stir your gallantry to make us a visit when this abominable storm has passed away. My present occupation is highly unpoetical—clouting, in short, and cobbling our old Scottish system of jurisprudence, with a view to reform. I am clerk to a commission under the authority of Parliament for this purpose, which keeps me more than busy enough.

'I have had a high quarrel with Constable and Co. The Edinburgh Review has driven them quite crazy, and its success led them to undervalue those who have been of most use to them—but they shall dearly abye it. The worst is, that being out of a publishing house, I have not interest to be of any service to Coleridge's intended paper.[1] Ballantyne, the printer, intends to open shop here on the part of his brother, and I am sure will do all he can to favour the work. Does it positively go on?

'I have read Wordsworth's lucubrations in the Courier[2] and much agree with him. Alas! we want everything but courage and virtue in this desperate contest. Skill, knowledge of mankind, ineffable unhesitating villainy, combination of movement and combination of means, are with our adversary. We can only fight like mastiffs, boldly, blindly, and faithfully. I am almost driven to the pass of the Covenanters, when they told the Almighty in their prayers, he should no longer be their God; and I really believe, a few Gazettes more will make me turn Turk or Infidel. Believe me, in great grief of spirit, dear Southey, ever yours, WALTER SCOTT.

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[1] Mr. Coleridge's 'Friend' was originally published in weekly papers.

[2] Mr. Wordsworth's Remarks on the Convention of Cintra were afterwards collected in a pamphlet.

'Mrs. Scott begs kind remembrance to Mrs. Southey. The bed in the said chamber in the wall is a double one.'

'*To the Same.*

'EDINBURGH, 31*st January* 1809.

'MY DEAR SOUTHEY—Yesterday I received your letter, and to-day I despatched Gomella and the third volume of Ramuzio. The other two volumes can also be sent, if you should find it necessary to consult them. The parcel is addressed to the paternal charge of your Keswick carrier. There is no hurry in returning these volumes, so don't derange your operations by hurrying your extracts, only keep them from any profane eye. I dipped into Gomella while I was waiting for intelligence from you, and was much edified by the *bonhomie* with which the miracles of the Jesuits are introduced.

'The news from Spain gave me such a mingled feeling, that I never suffered so much in my whole life from the disorder of spirits occasioned by affecting intelligence. My mind has naturally a strong military bent, though my path in life has been so very different. I love a drum and a soldier as heartily as ever Uncle Toby did, and between the pride arising from our gallant bearing, and the deep regret that so much bravery should run to waste, I spent a most disordered and agitated night, never closing my eyes but what I was harassed with visions of broken ranks, bleeding soldiers, dying horses—"and all the currents of a heady fight."[1] I agree with you that we want energy in our cabinet—or rather their opinions are so different, that they come to wretched compositions between them, which are worse than the worst course decidedly followed out. Canning is most anxious to support the Spaniards, and would have had a second army at Corunna, but for the positive demand of poor General Moore that empty transports should be sent thither. So the reinforcements were disembarked. I fear it will be found that Moore was rather an excellent officer, than a general of those comprehensive and daring views necessary in his dangerous situation. Had Wellesley been there, the battle of Corunna would have been fought and won at Somosierra, and the ranks of the victors would have been reinforced by the population of Madrid. Would to God we had yet 100,000 men in Spain. I fear not Buonaparte's tactics. The art of fence may do a great deal, but "*a la stoccata*," as Mercutio says, cannot carry it away from national valour and personal strength. The Opposition have sold or bartered every feeling of patriotism for the most greedy and selfish *egoisme*.

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[1] 1st K. Henry IV. Act II. Scene 2.

'Ballantyne's brother is setting up here as a bookseller, chiefly for publishing. I will recommend Coleridge's paper to him as strongly as I can. I hope by the time it is commenced he will be enabled to send him a handsome order. From my great regard for his brother, I shall give this young publisher what assistance I can. He is understood to start against Constable and the Reviewers, and publishes the Quarterly. Indeed he is in strict alliance, offensive and defensive, with John Murray of Fleet Street. I have also been labouring a little for the said Quarterly, which I believe you will detect. I hear very high things from Gifford of your article. About your visit to Edinburgh, I hope it will be a month later than you now propose, because my present prospects lead me to think I must be in London the whole month of April. Early in May I must return, and will willingly take the lakes in my way in hopes you will accompany me to Edinburgh, which you positively must not think of visiting in my absence.

'Lord Advocate, who is sitting behind me, says the Ministers have resolved not to abandon the Spaniards *coute que coute.* It is a spirited determination—but they must find a general who has, as the Turks say, *le Diable au corps*, and who, instead of standing staring to see what they mean to do, will teach them to dread those surprises and desperate enterprises by which they have been so often successful. Believe me, dear Southey, yours affectionately,

'WALTER SCOTT.

'Mrs. Scott joins me in best compliments to Mrs. Southey. I hope she will have a happy hour. Pray, write me word when the books come safe. What is Wordsworth doing, and where the devil is his Doe?[1] I am not sure if he will thank me for proving that all the Nortons escaped to Flanders, one excepted. I never knew a popular tradition so totally groundless as that respecting their execution at York.'

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[1] 'The White Doe of Rylestone' was published by Longman and Co. in 1819.

CHAPTER XIX

Case of a Poetical Tailor condemned to Death at Edinburgh —His Letters to Scott—Death of Camp—Scott in London—Mr. Morritt's description of him as 'a Lion' in Town—Dinner at Mr. Sotheby's—Coleridge's Fire, Famine, and Slaughter—The Quarterly Review started —First Visit to Rokeby—The Lady of the Lake begun —Excursion to the Trossachs and Loch Lomond—Letter on Byron's English Bards and Scotch Reviewers—Death of Daniel Scott—Correspondence about Mr. Canning's Duel with Lord Castlereagh—Miss Baillie's Family Legend acted at Edinburgh—Theatrical Anecdotes—Kemble—Siddons—Terry—Letter on the Death of Miss Seward.

1809–1810

In the end of 1808, a young man, by name Andrew Stewart, who had figured for some years before as a poetical contributor to the Scots Magazine, and inserted there, among other things, a set of stanzas in honour of The Last Minstrel,[1] was tried, and capitally convicted, on a charge of burglary. He addressed, some weeks after his sentence had been pronounced, the following letters :—

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[1] One verse of this production will suffice :—

'Sweetest Minstrel that e'er sung
Of valorous deeds by Scotia done,
Whose wild notes warbled in the win',
Delightful strain !
O'er hills and dales, and vales amang,
We've heard again,' etc.

'*To Walter Scott, Esq., Castle Street.*

'EDINBURGH TOLBOOTH, 20*th January* 1809.

'SIR—Although I am a stranger to you, yet I am not to your works, which I have read and admired, and which will continue to be read and admired as long as there remains a taste for true excellence. Previous to committing the crime for which I am convicted, I composed several poems in the Scottish dialect, which I herewith send for your perusal, and humbly hope you will listen to my tale of misery. I have been a truly unfortunate follower of the Muses. I was born in Edinburgh, of poor, but honest parents. My father is by trade a bookbinder, and my mother dying in 1798, he was left a widower, with five small children, who have all been brought up by his own industry. As soon as I was fit for a trade, he bound me apprentice to a tailor in Edinburgh, but owing to his using me badly, I went to law. The consequence was, I got up my indentures after being only two years in his service. To my father's trade I have to ascribe my first attachment to the Muses. I perused with delight the books that came in the way; and the effusions of the poets of my country I read with rapture. I now formed the resolution of not binding myself to a trade again, as by that means I might get my propensity for reading followed. I acted as clerk to different people, and my character was irreproachable. I determined to settle in life, and for that purpose I married a young woman I formed a strong attachment to. Being out of employment these last nine months, I suffered all the hardships of want, and saw

> Poverty, with empty hand
> And eager look, half-naked stand.
>
> FERGUSON.

Reduced to this miserable situation, with my wife almost starving, and having no friends to render me the smallest assistance, I resided in a furnished room till I was unable to pay the rent, and then I was literally turned out of doors, like poor Dermody, in poverty and rags. Having no kind hand stretched out to help me, I associated with company of very loose manners, till then strangers to me, and by them I was led to commit the crime I am condemned to suffer for. But my mind is so agitated, I can scarce narrate my tale of misery. My age is only twenty-three, and to all appearance will be cut off in the prime. I was tried along with my brother, Robert Stewart, and John M'Intyre, for breaking into the workshop of Peter More, calico-glazer, Edinburgh, and received the dreadful sentence to be executed on the 22nd of February next. We have no friends to apply to for Royal Mercy. If I had any kind friend to mention my case to my Lord Justice-Clerk, perhaps I might get my sentence mitigated. You will see my poems are of the humorous cast. Alas! it is now the contrary.—I remain your unfortunate humble servant, ANDREW STEWART.'

'*To the Same.*

'TOLBOOTH, *Sunday*.

'SIR—I received your kind letter last night, enclosing one pound sterling, for which I have only to request you will accept the return of a grateful heart. My prayers, while on earth, will be always for your welfare. Your letter came like a ministering angel to me. The idea of my approaching end darts across my brain; and, as our immortal bard, Shakspeare, says, "harrows up my soul." Some time since, when chance threw in my way Sir William Forbes's Life of Beattie, the account of the closing scene of Principal Campbell, as therein mentioned, made a deep impression on my mind. "At a time," says he, "when Campbell was just expiring, and had told his wife and niece so, a cordial happened unexpectedly to give some relief. As soon as he was able to speak, he said he wondered to see their faces so melancholy and covered with tears at the apprehension of his departure. '*At that instant*,' said he, '*I felt my mind in such a state in the thoughts of my immediate dissolution, that I can express my feelings in no other way than by saying I was in a rapture*.'" There is something awfully satisfactory in the above.

'I have to mention, as a dying man, that it was not the greed of money that made me commit the crime, but the extreme pressure of poverty and want.

How silent seems all—not a whisper is heard,
Save the guardians of night when they bawl;
How dreary and wild appears all around;
No pitying voice near my call.

O life, what are all thy gay pleasures and cares,
When deprived of sweet liberty's smile?
Not hope, in all thy gay charms arrayed,
Can one heavy hour now beguile.

How sad is the poor convict's sorrowful lot,
Condemned in these walls to remain,
When torn from those that are nearest his heart,
Perhaps ne'er to view them again.

The beauties of morning now burst on my view,
Remembrance of scenes that are past,
When contentment sat smiling, and happy my lot—
Scenes, alas! formed not for to last.

Now fled are the hours I delighted to roam
Scotia's hills, dales, and valleys among,
And with rapture would list to the songs of her bards,
And love's tale as it flowed from the tongue.

Nought but death now awaits me; how dread, but how true!
How ghastly its form does appear!
Soon silent the muse that delighted to view
And sing of the sweets of the year.

'You are the first gentleman I ever sent my poems to, and I never corrected any of them, my mind has been in such a state.—I remain, sir, your grateful, unfortunate servant, ANDREW STEWART.'

It appears that Scott, and his good-natured old friend, Mr. Manners, the bookseller, who happened at this time to be one of the bailies of Edinburgh, exerted their joint influence in this tailor-poet's behalf, and with such success, that his sentence was commuted for one of transportation for life. A thin octavo pamphlet, entitled, 'POEMS, chiefly in the Scottish dialect, by Andrew Stewart; printed for the benefit of the Author's Father, and sold by Manners and Miller, and A. Constable and Co., 1809,' appeared soon after the convict's departure for Botany Bay. But as to his fortunes in that new world I possess no information. There seemed to me something so striking in the working of his feelings as expressed in his letters to Scott, that I thought the reader would forgive this little episode.

In the course of February, Mr. John Ballantyne had proceeded to London, for the purpose of introducing himself to the chief publishers there in his new capacity, and especially of taking Mr. Murray's instructions respecting the Scotch management of the Quarterly Review. As soon as the spring vacation began, Scott followed him by sea. He might naturally have wished to be at hand while his new partner was forming arrangements on which so much must depend; but some circumstances in the procedure of the Scotch Law Commission had made the Lord Advocate request his presence at this time in town. There he and Mrs. Scott took up their quarters, as usual, under the roof of their kind old friends the Dumergues; while their eldest girl enjoyed the advantage of being domesticated with the Miss Baillies at Hampstead. They stayed more than two months, and this being his first visit to town since his fame had been crowned by Marmion, he was of course more than ever the object of general curiosity and attention. Mr. Morritt saw much of him, both at his own house in Portland Place and elsewhere, and I transcribe a few sentences from his *memoranda* of the period.

'Scott,' his friend says, 'more correctly than any other man I ever knew, appreciated the value of that apparently enthusiastic *engouement* which the world of London shows to the fashionable wonder of the year. During this sojourn of 1809, the homage paid him would have turned the head of any less-gifted man of eminence. It neither altered his opinions, nor produced the affectation of despising it; on the contrary, he received it, cultivated it, and repaid it in its own coin. "All this is very flattering," he would say, "and very civil; and if people are amused with hearing me tell a parcel of old stories, or recite a pack of ballads to lovely young girls and gaping matrons, they are easily pleased, and a man would be very ill-natured who would not give pleasure so cheaply conferred." If he dined with us and found any new faces, "Well, do you want me to play lion to-day?" was his usual question—"I will roar if you like it to your heart's content." He would, indeed, in such cases put forth all his inimitable powers of entertainment—and day after day surprised me by their unexpected extent and variety. Then, as the party dwindled, and we were left alone, he laughed at himself, quoted—"Yet know that I one Snug the joiner am—no lion fierce," etc.—and was at once himself again.

'He often lamented the injurious effects for literature and genius resulting from the influence of London celebrity on weaker minds, especially in the excitement of ambition for this subordinate and ephemeral *reputation du salon.* "It may be a pleasant gale to sail with," he said, "but it never yet led to a port that I should like to anchor in"; nor did he willingly endure, either in London or in Edinburgh, the little exclusive circles of literary society, much less their occasional fastidiousness and petty partialities.

'One story which I heard of him from Dr. Howley, now Archbishop of Canterbury (for I was not present), was very characteristic. The Doctor was one of a grand congregation of lions, where Scott and Coleridge, *cum multis aliis*, attended, at Sotheby's. Poets and poetry were the topics of the table, and there was plentiful recitation of effusions as yet unpublished, which of course obtained abundant applause. Coleridge repeated more than one, which, as Dr. H. thought, were eulogized by some of the company with something like affectation, and a desire to humble Scott by raising a poet of inferior reputation on his shoulders. Scott, however, joined in the compliments as cordially as anybody, until, in his turn, he was invited to display some of his occasional poetry, much of which he must, no doubt, have written. Scott said he had published so much, he had nothing of his own left that he could think worth their hearing, but he would repeat a little copy of verses which he had shortly before seen in a provincial newspaper, and which seemed to him almost as good as anything they had been listening to with so much pleasure. He repeated the stanzas now so well known of "Fire, Famine, and Slaughter." The applauses that ensued were faint — then came slight criticisms, from which Scott defended the unknown author. At last a more bitter antagonist opened, and fastening upon one line, cried, "This at least is absolute nonsense." Scott denied the charge — the Zoilus persisted — until Coleridge, out of all patience, exclaimed, "For God's sake let Mr. Scott alone — I wrote the poem." This exposition of the real worth of dinner criticism can hardly be excelled.[1]

'He often complained of the real dulness of parties where each guest arrived under the implied and tacit obligation of exhibiting some extraordinary powers of talk or wit. "If," he said, "I encounter men of the world, men of business, odd or striking characters of professional excellence in any department, I am in my element, for they cannot lionize me without my returning the compliment and learning something from them." He was much with George Ellis, Canning, and Croker, and delighted in them,—as indeed who did not?—but he loved to study eminence of every class and sort, and his rising fame gave him easy access to gratify all his curiosity.'

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[1] It may amuse the reader to turn to Mr. Coleridge's own stately account of this lion-show in Grosvenor Street, in the Preface to his celebrated Eclogue. There was one person present, it seems, who had been in the secret of its authorship—Sir Humphrey Davy; and no one could have enjoyed the scene more than he must have done. 'At the house,' Coleridge says, 'of a gentleman who, by the principles and corresponding virtues of a sincere Christian, consecrates a cultivated genius and the favourable accidents of birth, opulence, and splendid connexions, it was my good fortune to meet, in a dinner party, with more men of celebrity in science or polite literature than are commonly found collected around the same table. In the course of conversation, one of the party reminded an illustrious poet,' etc. etc.—Coleridge's Poetical Works, Edition 1835, vol. i. p. 274.

The meetings with Canning, Croker, and Ellis, to which Mr. Morritt alludes, were, as may be supposed, chiefly occupied with the affairs of the Quarterly Review. The first number of that Journal appeared while Scott was in London: it contained three articles from his pen—namely, one on the Reliques of Burns; another on the Chronicle of the Cid; and a third on Sir John Carr's Tour through Scotland. His conferences with the editor and publisher were frequent; and the latter certainly contemplated, at this time, a most close and intimate connexion with him, not only as a reviewer, but an author; and, consequently, with both the concerns of the Messrs. Ballantyne. Scott continued for some time to be a very active contributor to the Quarterly Review; nor, indeed, was his connexion with it ever entirely suspended. But John Ballantyne transacted business in a fashion which soon cooled, and in no very long time dissolved, the general 'alliance offensive and defensive' with Murray, which Scott had announced before leaving Edinburgh to both Southey and Ellis.

On his return northwards he spent a fortnight in Yorkshire with Mr. Morritt; but his correspondence, from which I resume my extracts, will show, among other things, the lively impression made on him by his first view of Rokeby.

The next of these letters reminds me, however, that I should have mentioned sooner the death of Camp, the first of not a few dogs whose names will be 'freshly remembered' as long as their master's works are popular. This favourite began to droop early in 1808, and became incapable of accompanying Scott in his rides; but he preserved his affection and sagacity to the last. At Ashestiel, as the servant was laying the cloth for dinner, he would address the dog lying on his mat by the fire, and say, 'Camp, my good fellow, the Sheriff's coming home by the ford—or by the hill'; and the sick animal would immediately bestir himself to welcome his master, going out at the back door or the front door, according to the direction given, and advancing as far as he was able, either towards the ford of the Tweed, or the bridge over the Glenkinnon burn beyond Laird Nippy's gate. He died about January 1809, and was buried in a fine moonlight night, in the little garden behind the house in Castle Street, immediately opposite to the window at which Scott usually sat writing. My wife tells me she remembers the whole family standing in tears about the grave, as her father himself smoothed down the turf above Camp with the saddest expression of face she had ever seen in him. He had been engaged to dine abroad that day, but apologized on account of 'the death of a dear old friend'; and Mr. Macdonald Buchanan was not at all surprised that he should have done so, when it came out next morning that Camp was no more.

'*To George Ellis, Esq.*

'EDINBURGH, *July* 8, 1809.

'MY DEAR ELLIS—We reached home about a fortnight ago, having lingered a little while at Rokeby Park, the seat of our friend Morritt, and one of the most enviable places I have ever seen, as it unites the richness and luxuriance of English vegetation with the romantic variety of glen, torrent, and copse, which dignifies our northern scenery. The Greta and Tees, two most beautiful and rapid rivers, join their currents in the demesne. The banks of the Tees resemble, from the height of the rocks, the glen of Roslin, so much and justly admired. The Greta is the scene of a comic romance,[1] of which I think I remember giving you the outline. It concerns the history of a "Felon Sowe,"—

Which won'd in Rokeby wood,
Ran endlong Greta side,

bestowed by Ralph of Rokeby on the freres of Richmond—and the misadventures of the holy fathers in their awkward attempts to catch this intractable animal. We had the pleasure to find all our little folks well, and are now on the point of shifting quarters to Ashestiel. I have supplied the vacancy occasioned by the death of poor old Camp with a terrier puppy of the old shaggy Celtic breed. He is of high pedigree, and was procured with great difficulty by the kindness of Miss Dunlop of Dunlop; so I have christened him Wallace, as the donor is a descendant of the Guardian of Scotland. Having given you all this curious and valuable information about my own affairs, let me call your attention to the enclosed, which was in fact the principal cause of my immediately troubling you.' * * *

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[1] Scott printed this Ballad in the Notes to his poem of Rokeby.

The enclosure, and the rest of the letter, refer to the private affairs of Mr. Southey, in whose favour Scott had for some time back been strenuously using his interest with his friends in the Government. How well he had, while in London, read the feelings of some of those ministers towards each other, appears from various letters written upon his return to Scotland. It may be sufficient to quote part of one addressed to the distinguished author whose fortunes he was exerting himself to promote. To him Scott says (14th June),—'Mr. Canning's opportunities to serve you will soon be numerous, or they will soon be gone altogether; for he is of a different mould from some of his colleagues, and a decided foe to those half measures which I know you detest as much as I do. It is not his fault that the cause of Spain is not at this moment triumphant. This I know, and the time will come when the world will know it too.'

Before fixing himself at Ashestiel for the autumn, he had undertaken to have a third poem ready for publication by the end of the year, and probably made some progress in the composition of the Lady of the Lake. On the rising of the Court in July, he went, accompanied by Mrs. Scott and his eldest daughter, to revisit the localities, so dear to him in the days of his juvenile rambling, which he had chosen for the scene of his fable. He gave a week to his old friends at Cambusmore, and ascertained, in his own person, that a good horseman, well mounted, might gallop from the shore of Loch Vennachar to the rock of Stirling within the space allotted for that purpose to FitzJames. From Cambusmore the party proceeded to Ross Priory, and, under the guidance of Mr. Macdonald Buchanan, explored the islands of Loch Lomond, Arrochar, Loch Sloy, and all the scenery of a hundred desperate conflicts between the Macfarlanes, the Colquhouns, and the Clan Alpine. At Buchanan House, which is very near Ross Priory, Scott's friends, Lady Douglas and Lady Louisa Stuart, were then visiting the Duke of Montrose; he joined them there, and read to them the Stag Chase, which he had just completed under the full influence of the *genius loci*.

It was on this occasion, at Buchanan House, that he first saw Lord Byron's 'English Bards and Scotch Reviewers.' On this subject he says, in his Introduction to Marmion of 1830—'When Byron wrote his famous satire, I had my share of flagellation among my betters. My crime was having written a poem for a thousand pounds, which was no otherwise true than that I sold the copyright for that sum. Now, not to mention that an author can hardly be censured for accepting such a sum as the booksellers are willing to give him, especially as the gentlemen of the trade made no complaints of their bargain, I thought the interference with my private affairs was rather beyond the limits of literary satire. I was, moreover, so far from having had anything to do with the offensive criticism in the Edinburgh, that I had remonstrated with the editor, because I thought the "Hours of Idleness" treated with undue severity. They were written, like all juvenile poetry, rather from the recollection of what had pleased the author in others, than what had been suggested by his own imagination; but nevertheless I thought they contained passages of noble promise.'

I need hardly transcribe the well-known lines—

Next view in state, proud prancing on his roan,
The golden-crested haughty Marmion,—

down to

> For this we spurn Apollo's venal son,
> And bid a long 'good-night to Marmion,'—

with his Lordship's note on the last line—'Good-night to Marmion, the pathetic and also prophetic exclamation of Henry Blount, Esquire, on the death of honest Marmion.'—But it may entertain my readers to compare the style in which Scott alludes to Byron's assault in the preface of 1830, with that of one of his contemporary letters on the subject. Addressing (August 7, 1809) the gentleman in whose behalf he had been interceding with Mr. Canning, he says—'By the way, is the ancient * * * *, whose decease is to open our quest, thinking of a better world? I only ask because about three years ago I accepted the office I hold in the Court of Session, the revenue to accrue to me only on the death of the old incumbent. But my friend has since taken out a new lease of life, and unless I get some Border lad to cut his throat, may, for aught I know, live as long as I shall;—such odious deceivers are these invalids. Mine reminds me of Sinbad's Old Man of the Sea, and will certainly throttle me if I can't somehow dismount him. If I were once in possession of my reversionary income, I would, like you, bid farewell to the drudgery of literature, and do nothing but what I pleased, which might be another phrase for doing very little. I was always an admirer of the modest wish of a retainer in one of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays—

> I would not be a serving man
>   To carry the cloak-bag still,
> Nor would I be a falconer,
>   The greedy hawks to fill;
> But I would be in a good house,
>   And have a good master too,
> But I would eat and drink of the best,
>   And *no* work would I do.[1]

In the meantime, it is funny enough to see a whelp of a young Lord Byron abusing me, of whose circumstances he knows nothing, for endeavouring to scratch out a living with my pen. God help the bear, if, having little else to eat, he must not even suck his own paws. I can assure the noble imp of fame it is not my fault that I was not born to a park and £5000 a year, as it is not his lordship's merit, although it may be his great good fortune, that he was not born to live by his literary talents or success. Adieu, my dear friend. I shall be impatient to hear how your matters fadge.'

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[1] Old Merrythought—The Knight of the Burning Pestle, Act IV. Scene 5.

This gentleman's affairs are again alluded to in a letter to Ellis, dated Ashestiel, September 14:—'I do not write to whet a purpose that is not blunted, but to express my anxious wishes that your kind endeavours may succeed while it is called *to-day*, for, by all tokens, it will soon be *yesterday* with this Ministry. And they well deserve it, for crossing, jostling, and hampering the measures of the only man among them fit to be intrusted with the salvation of the country. The spring-tide may, for aught I know, break in this next session of Parliament. There is an evil fate upon us in all we do at home and abroad, else why should the conqueror of Talavera be retreating from the field of his glory at a moment when, by all reasonable calculation, he should have been the soul and mover of a combined army of 150,000 English, Spaniards, and Portuguese? And why should Gifford employ himself at home in the thriftless exercise of correction, as if Mercury, instead of stretching to a race himself, were to amuse himself with starting a bedrid cripple, and making a pair of crutches for him with his own hand? Much might have been done, and may yet be done; but we are not yet in the right way. Is there no one among you who can throw a Congreve rocket among the gerunds and supines of that model of pedants, Dr. Philopatris Parr? I understand your foreign lingos too little to attempt it, but pretty things might be said upon the memorable tureen which he begged of Lord Somebody, whom he afterwards wished to prove to be mad. For example, I would adopt some of the leading phrases of *independent*, *high-souled*, *contentus parvo*, and so forth, with which he is bespattered in the Edinburgh,[1] and declare it *our* opinion, that, if indulged with the three wishes of Prior's tale, he would answer, like the heroine Corisca—

> A ladle to my silver dish
> Is all I want, is all I wish.

I did *not* review Miss Edgeworth, nor do I think it all well done; at least, it falls below my opinion of that lady's merits. Indeed I have contributed nothing to the last Review, and am, therefore, according to all rules, the more entitled to criticise it freely. The conclusion of the article on Sir John Moore is transcendently written; and I think I can venture to say, "*aut Erasmus*, *aut Diabolus*." Your sugar-cake is very far from being a heavy *bon-bon;* but there I think we stop. The Missionaries, though very good, is on a subject rather stale, and much of the rest is absolute wading.[2]

'As an excuse for my own indolence, I have been in the Highlands for some time past; and who should I meet there, of all fowls in the air, but your friend Mr. Blackburn, to whom I was so much obliged for the care he took of my late unfortunate relative, at your friendly request. The recognition was unfortunately made just when I was leaving the country, and as he was in a gig, and I on the driving-seat of a carriage, the place of meeting a narrow Highland road, which looked as if forty patent ploughs had furrowed it, we had not time or space for so long a greeting as we could have wished. He has a capital good house on the banks of the Leven, about three miles below its discharge from the lake, and very near the classical spot where Matthew Bramble and his whole family were conducted by Smollett, and where Smollett himself was born. There is a new inducement for you to come to Caledon. Your health, thank God, is now no impediment; and I am told sugar and rum excel even whisky, so your purse must be proportionally distended.'

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[1] See Article on Dr. Parr's Spittal Sermon, in the Edinburgh Review, No. I. October 1802.

[2] Quarterly Review, No. III. August 1809.

The unfortunate brother, the blot of the family, to whom Scott alludes in this letter, had disappointed all the hopes under which his friends sent him to Jamaica. It may be remarked, as characteristic of Scott at this time, that in the various letters to Ellis concerning Daniel, he speaks of him as his *relation*, never as his *brother*; and it must also be mentioned as a circumstance suggesting that Daniel had retained, after all, some sense of pride, that his West-Indian patron was allowed by himself to remain, to the end of their connexion, in ignorance of what his distinguished brother had thus thought fit to suppress. Mr. Blackburn, in fact, never knew that Daniel was Walter Scott's brother, until he was applied to for some information respecting him on my own behalf, after this narrative was begun. The story is shortly, that the adventurer's habits of dissipation proved incurable; but he finally left Jamaica under a stigma which Walter Scott regarded with utter severity. Being employed in some service against a refractory or insurgent body of negroes, he had exhibited a lamentable deficiency of spirit and conduct. He returned to Scotland a dishonoured man; and though he found shelter and compassion from his mother, his brother would never see him again. Nay, when soon after, his health, shattered by dissolute indulgence, and probably the intolerable load of shame, gave way altogether, and he died as yet a young man, the poet refused either to attend his funeral or to wear mourning for him like the rest of the family. Thus sternly, when in the height and pride of his blood, could Scott, whose heart was never hardened against the distress of an enemy, recoil from the disgrace of a brother. It is a more pleasing part of my duty to add, that he spoke to me, twenty years afterwards, in terms of great and painful contrition for the austerity with which he had conducted himself on this occasion. I must add, moreover, that he took a warm interest in a natural child whom Daniel had bequeathed to his mother's care; and after the old lady's death, religiously supplied her place as the boy's protector.

About this time the edition of Sir Ralph Sadler's State

Papers, etc. (3 vols. royal 4to) was at length completed by Scott, and published by Constable; but the letters which passed between the Editor and the bookseller show that their personal estrangement had as yet undergone slender alteration. The collection of the Sadler papers was chiefly the work of Mr. Arthur Clifford—but Scott drew up the Memoir and Notes, and superintended the printing. His account of the Life of Sadler[1] extends to thirty pages; and both it and his notes are written with all that lively solicitude about points of antiquarian detail, which accompanied him through so many tasks less attractive than the personal career of a distinguished statesman intimately connected with the fortunes of Mary Queen of Scots. Some volumes of the edition of Somers's Tracts (which he had undertaken for Mr. Miller and other booksellers of London two or three years before) were also published about the same period; but that compilation was not finished (13 vols. royal 4to) until 1812. His part in it (for which the booksellers paid him 1300 guineas) was diligently performed, and shows abundant traces of his sagacious understanding and graceful expression. His editorial labours on Dryden, Swift, and these other collections, were gradually storing his mind with that minute and accurate knowledge of the leading persons and events both of Scotch and English history, which made his conversation on such subjects that of one who had rather lived with than read about the departed; while, unlike other antiquaries, he always preserved the keenest interest in the transactions of his own time.

The reader has seen, that during his stay in London in the spring of this year, Scott became strongly impressed with a suspicion that the Duke of Portland's Cabinet could not much longer hold together; and the letters which have been quoted, when considered along with the actual course of subsequent events, can leave little doubt that he had gathered this impression from the tone of Mr. Canning's private conversation as to the recent management of the War Department. On the 20th of September,

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[1] Republished in the Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. iv.

Lord Castlereagh tendered his resignation, and wrote the same day to Mr. Canning in these terms: 'Having,' he said, 'pronounced it unfit that I should remain charged with the conduct of the war, and made my situation as a Minister of the Crown dependent on your will and pleasure, you continued to sit in the same Cabinet with me, and leave me not only in the persuasion that I possessed your confidence and support as a colleague, but allowed me, in breach of every principle of good faith, both public and private, to originate and proceed in the execution of a new enterprise of the most arduous and important nature (the Walcheren expedition) with your apparent concurrence and ostensible approbation. You were fully aware that, if my situation in the government had been disclosed to me, I could not have submitted to remain one moment in office, without the entire abandonment of my private honour and public duty. You knew I was deceived, and you continued to deceive me.'[1]

The result was a duel on the morning of the 21st, in which Mr. Canning was attended by Mr. Charles Ellis (now Lord Seaford) as his second. Mr. Canning, at the second fire, was wounded in the thigh. Both combatants retired from office; the Duke of Portland, whose health was entirely broken, resigned the premiership; and after fruitless negotiations with Lords Grey and Grenville, Mr. Percival became First Lord of the Treasury, as well as Chancellor of the Exchequer; while the Marquis Wellesley took the Seals of the Foreign Department, and Lord Liverpool removed from the Home Office to that which Lord Castlereagh had occupied. There were some other changes, but Scott's friend, Mr. R. Dundas (now Lord Melville), remained in his place at the head of the Board of Control.

While the public mind was occupied with the duel and its yet uncertain results, Scott wrote as follows to the nearest relation and most intimate friend of Mr. Canning's second :—

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[1] In the Preface to Mr. Therry's Compilation of Mr. Canning's Speeches, the reader will find the contemporary documents, on which alone a fair judgment can be formed as to the origin and nature of Mr. Canning's differences with Lord Castlereagh.

'*To George Ellis, Esq.*

'ASHESTIEL, *Sept.* 26, 1809.

'MY DEAR ELLIS—Your letter gave me great pleasure, especially the outside, for Canning's frank assured me that his wound was at least not materially serious. So, for once, the envelope of your letter was even more welcome than the contents. That harebrained Irishman's letter carries absurdity upon the face of it, for surely he would have had much more reason for personal animosity had Canning made the matter public, against the wishes of his uncle, and every other person concerned, than for his consenting, at their request, that it should remain a secret, and leaving it to them to make such communication to Lord C. as they should think proper, and *when* they should think proper. I am ill situated here for the explanations I would wish to give, but I have forwarded copies of the letters to Lord Dalkeith, a high-spirited and independent young nobleman, in whose opinion Mr. Canning would, I think, wish to stand well. I have also taken some measures to prevent the good folks of Edinburgh from running after any straw that may be thrown into the wind. I wrote a very hurried note to Mr. C. Ellis the instant I *saw* the accident in the papers, not knowing exactly where you might be, and trusting he would excuse my extreme anxiety and solicitude upon the occasion.

'I see, among other reports, that my friend, Robert Dundas, is mentioned as Secretary at War. I confess I shall be both vexed and disappointed if he, of whose talents and opinions I think very highly, should be prevailed on to embark in so patched and crazy a vessel as can now be lashed together, and that upon a sea which promises to be sufficiently boisterous. My own hopes of every kind are as low as the heels of my boots, and methinks I would say to any friend of mine as Tybalt says to Benvolio—"What! art thou drawn among these heartless hinds?" I suppose the Doctor will be *move* the first, and then the Whigs will come in like a land-flood, and lay the country at the feet of Buonaparte for peace. This, if his devil does not fail, he will readily patch up, and send a few hundred thousands among our coach-driving Noblesse, and perhaps among our Princes of the Blood. With the influence acquired by such *gages d'amitié*, and by ostentatious hospitality at his court to all those idiots who will forget the rat-trap of the *detenus*, and crowd there for novelty, there will be, in the course of five or six years, what we have never yet seen, a real French party in this country. To this you are to add all the Burdettites, men who, rather than want combustibles, will fetch brimstone from hell. It is not these whom I fear, however,—it is the vile and degrading spirit of *egoisme* so prevalent among the higher ranks, especially among the highest. God forgive me if I do them injustice, but I think champagne duty free would go a great way to seduce some of them; and is it not a strong symptom when people, knowing and feeling their own weakness, will, from mere selfishness and pride, suffer the vessel to drive on the shelves, rather than she should be saved by the only pilot capable of the task? I will be much obliged to you to let me know what is likely to be done—whether any fight can yet be made, or if all is over. Lord Melville had been furious for some time against this Administration—I think *he* will hardly lend a hand to clear the wreck. I should think, if Marquis Wellesley returns, he might form a steady Administration; but God wot, he must condemn most of the present rotten planks before he can lay down the new vessel. Above all, let me know how Canning's recovery goes on. We must think what is to be done about the Review.—Ever yours truly, W. S.'

Scott's views as to the transactions of this period, and the principal parties concerned in them, were considerably altered by the observation of subsequent years; but I have been much interested with watching the course of his sentiments and opinions on such subjects; and, in the belief that others may feel in the same way with myself, I shall insert, without comment, some further extracts from this correspondence:—

'*To the Same.*

'ASHESTIEL, *Nov.* 3, 1809.

'MY DEAR ELLIS—I had your letter some time ago, which gave me less comfort in the present public emergency than your letters usually do. Frankly, I see great doubts, not to say an impossibility, of Canning's attaining that rank among the Opposition which will enable him to command the use of their shoulders to place him where—you cannot be more convinced than I am—he is entitled to stand. The *condottieri* of the Grenvilles,—for they have no political principles, and therefore no political *party*, detached from their immense influence over individuals—will hardly be seduced from their standard to that of Canning, by an eloquence which has been exerted upon them in vain, even when they might have hoped to be gainers by listening to it. The *soi-disant* Whigs stick together like burs. The ragged regiment of Burdett and Folkstone is under yet stricter discipline, for you may have observed that no lover was ever so jealous of his mistress as Sir Francis is of his mob popularity—witness the fate of Paull, Tierney, even Wardle; in short, of whomsoever presumed to rival the brazen image whom the mob of Westminster has set up.[1] That either, or both of these parties, will be delighted with the accession of our friend's wisdom and eloquence, cannot for a moment be disputed. That the Grenvilles, in particular, did he only propose to himself a slice of the great pudding, would allow him to help himself where the plums lie thickest, cannot be doubted. But I think it is very doubtful whether they, closely banded and confident of triumph as they at present are, will accept of a colleague upon terms which would make him a master; and unless Canning has these, it appears to me that *we* (the Republic) should be no better than if he had retained his office in the present, or rather late, Administration. But how far, in throwing himself altogether into the arms of Opposition at this crisis, Canning will injure himself with the large and sound party who profess *Pittism*, is, I really think, worthy of consideration. The influence of his name is at present as great as you or I could wish it; but those who wish to undermine it want but, according to our Scottish proverb, "a hair to make a tether of." I admit his hand is very difficult to play, and much as I love and admire him, I am most interested because it is the decided interest of his country, that he should pique, repique, and capot his antagonists. But you know much of the delicacy of the game lies in *discarding*—so I hope he will be in no hurry on throwing out his cards.

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[1] Sir Francis Burdett has lived to show how unjustly the Tories of 1809 read his political character.

'I am the more anxious on this score, because I feel an internal conviction that neither Marquis Wellesley nor Lord Melville will lend their names to bolster out this rump of an Administration. Symptoms of this are said to have transpired in Scotland, but in this retirement I cannot learn upon what authority. Should this prove so, I confess my best wishes would be realized, because I cannot see how Percival could avoid surrendering at discretion, and taking, perhaps, a peerage. We should then have an Administration *à la Pitt*, which is a much better thing than an Opposition, howsoever conducted or headed, which, like a wave of the sea, forms indeed but a single body when it is rolling towards the shore, but dashes into foam and dispersion the instant it reaches its object. Should Canning and the above-named noble peers come to understand each other, joined to all among the present Ministry whom their native good sense, and an attachment to good warm places, will lead to hear reason, it does seem to me that we might form a deeper front to the enemy than we have presented since the death of Pitt, or rather since the dissolution of his first Administration. But if this be a dream, as it may very probably be, I still hope Canning will take his own ground in Parliament, and hoist his own standard. Sooner or later it must be successful. So much for politics—about which, after all, my neighbours the *blackcocks* know about as much as I do.

'I have a great deal to write you about a new poem which I have on the anvil—also, upon the melancholy death of a favourite greyhound bitch—rest her body, since I dare not say soul! She was of high blood and excellent promise. Should any of your sporting friends have a whelp to spare, of a good kind, and of the female sex, I would be grateful beyond measure, especially if she has had the distemper. As I have quite laid aside the gun, coursing is my only and constant amusement, and my valued pair of four-legged champions, Douglas and Percy, wax old and *unfeary*.—Ever yours truly, W. S.'

'*To Walter Scott, Esq.*

'GLOUCESTER LODGE, *Nov.* 13, 1809.

'MY DEAR SIR—I am very sensibly gratified by your kind expressions, whether of condolence or congratulation, and I acknowledge, if not (with your Highland writer) the synonymousness of the two terms, at least the union of the two sentiments, as applied to my present circumstances. I am not so heroically fond of being *out* (*quâtenus out*), as not to consider that a matter of condolence. But I am at the same time sufficiently convinced of the desirableness of not being *in*, when one should be *in* to no purpose, either of public advantage or personal credit, to be satisfied that on that ground I am entitled to your congratulations.

'I should be very happy indeed to look forward, with the prospect of being able to realize it, to the trip to Scotland which you suggest to me; and still more to the visit included therein, which, as you hold it out, would not be the least part of my temptation. Of this, however, I hope we shall have opportunities of talking before the season arrives; for I reckon upon your spring visit to

London, and think of it, I assure you, with great pleasure, as likely to happen at a period when I shall have it more in my power than I have had on any former occasion to enjoy the advantage of it. You will find me not in quite so romantic a scene of seclusion and tranquillity here as that which you describe—but very tranquil and secluded nevertheless, at a mile and a half's distance from Hyde Park Corner—a distance considerable enough, as I now am, to save me from any very overwhelming "unda salutantium."

'Here, or anywhere else, I beg you to believe in the very sincere satisfaction which I shall derive from your society, and which I do derive from the assurance of your regard and good opinion.—Ever, my dear sir, very truly and faithfully yours, GEO. CANNING.

'*P.S.*—I expect, in the course of this week, to send you a copy of a more ample statement of the circumstances of my retirement, which the misrepresentations of some who, I *think*, must have known they were misrepresenting (though *that* I must not say), have rendered necessary.'

I could not quote more largely from these political letters without trespassing against the feelings of distinguished individuals still alive. I believe the extracts which I have given are sufficient to illustrate the sagacity with which Scott had at that early period apprehended the dangers to which the political career of Mr. Canning was exposed, by the jealousy of the old Tory aristocracy on the one hand, and the insidious flatteries of Whig intriguers on the other. I willingly turn from his politics to some other matters, which about this time occupied a large share of his thoughts.

He had from his boyish days a great love for theatrical representation; and so soon as circumstances enabled him to practise extended hospitality, the chief actors of his time, whenever they happened to be in Scotland, were among the most acceptable of his guests. Mr. Charles

Young was, I believe, the first of them of whom he saw much: As early as 1803 I find him writing of that gentleman to the Marchioness of Abercorn as a valuable addition to the society of Edinburgh; and down to the end of Scott's life, Mr. Young was never in the north without visiting him.

Another graceful and intelligent performer in whom he took a special interest, and of whom he saw a great deal in his private circle, was Miss Smith, afterwards Mrs. Bartley. But at the period of which I am now treating, his principal theatrical intimacy was with John Philip Kemble, and his sister, Mrs. Siddons, both of whom he appears to have often met at Lord Abercorn's villa near Stanmore, during his spring visits to London after the first establishment of his poetical celebrity. Of John Kemble's personal character and manners, he has recorded his impressions in a pleasing reviewal of Mr. Boaden's Memoir.[1] The great tragedian's love of black-letter learning, especially of dramatic antiquities, afforded a strong bond of fellowship; and I have heard Scott say that the only man who ever seduced him into very deep potations in his middle life was Kemble. He was frequently at Ashestiel, and the 'fat Scotch butler,' whom Mr. Skene has described to us, by name *John Macbeth*, made sore complaints of the bad hours kept on such occasions in one of the most regular of households; but the watchings of the night were not more grievous to 'Cousin Macbeth,' as Kemble called the honest *beauffetier*, than were the hazards and fatigues of the morning to the representative of 'the Scotch usurper.' Kemble's miseries during a rough gallop were quite as grotesque as those of his namesake, and it must be owned that species of distress was one from the contemplation of which his host could never derive anything but amusement.

I have heard Scott chuckle with particular glee over the recollection of an excursion to the vale of the Ettrick, near which river the party were pursued by a bull. 'Come, King John,' said he, 'we must even take the water,' and accordingly he and his daughter plunged into the stream. But King John, halting on the bank and surveying the river, which happened to be full and turbid, exclaimed, in his usual solemn manner,

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[1] Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. xx.

—— The flood is angry, Sheriff;
Methinks I'll get me up into a tree.[1]

It was well that the dogs had succeeded in diverting the bull, because there was no tree at hand which could have sustained King John, nor, had that been otherwise, could so stately a personage have dismounted and ascended with such alacrity as circumstances would have required. He at length followed his friends through the river with the rueful dignity of Don Quixote.

It was this intercourse which led Scott to exert himself very strenuously, when some change in the administration of the Edinburgh theatre became necessary—(I believe in 1808),—to prevail on Mr. Henry Siddons, the nephew of Kemble, to undertake the lease and management. Such an arrangement would, he expected, induce both Kemble and his sister to be more in Scotland than hitherto; and what he had seen of young Siddons himself led him to prognosticate a great improvement in the whole conduct of the northern stage. His wishes were at length accomplished in the summer of 1809. On this occasion he purchased a share, and became one of the acting trustees for the general body of proprietors; and thenceforth, during a long series of years, he continued to take a very lively concern in the proceedings of the Edinburgh company. In this he was plentifully encouraged by his domestic *camarilla;* for his wife had all a Frenchwoman's passion for the *spectacle;* and the elder of the two Ballantynes

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[1] John Kemble's most familiar table-talk often flowed into blank verse; and so indeed did his sister's. Scott (who was a capital mimic) often repeated her tragic exclamation to a footboy during a dinner at Ashestiel—

You've brought me water, boy,—I asked for beer.

Another time, dining with a Provost of Edinburgh, she ejaculated, in answer to her host's apology for his *pièce de résistance*—

Beef cannot be too salt for me, my Lord!

(both equally devoted to the company of players) was a regular newspaper critic of theatrical affairs, and in that capacity had already attained a measure of authority supremely gratifying to himself.

The first new play produced by Henry Siddons was the Family Legend of Joanna Baillie. This was, I believe, the first of her dramas that ever underwent the test of representation in her native kingdom; and Scott appears to have exerted himself most indefatigably in its behalf. He was consulted about all the *minutiæ* of costume, attended every rehearsal, and supplied the prologue. The play was better received than any other which the gifted authoress has since subjected to the same experiment; and how ardently Scott enjoyed its success will appear from a few specimens of the many letters which he addressed to his friend on the occasion.

The first of these letters is dated Edinburgh, October 27, 1809. He had gone into town for the purpose of entering his eldest boy at the High School:—

'On receiving your long kind letter yesterday, I sought out Siddons, who was equally surprised and delighted at your liberal arrangement about the Lady of the Rock. I will put all the names to rights, and retain enough of locality and personality to please the antiquary, without the least risk of bringing the clan Gillian about our ears. I went through the theatre, which is the most complete little thing of the kind I ever saw, elegantly fitted up, and large enough for every purpose. I trust, with you, that in this as in other cases, our Scotch poverty may be a counterbalance to our Scotch pride, and that we shall not need in my time a larger or more expensive building. Siddons himself observes, that even for the purposes of show (so paramount nowadays) a moderate stage is better fitted than a large one, because the machinery is pliable and manageable in proportion to its size. With regard to the equipment of the Family Legend, I have been much diverted with a discovery which I have made. I had occasion to visit our Lord Provost (by profession a stocking-weaver), and was surprised to find the worthy magistrate filled with a new-born zeal for the drama. He spoke of Mr. Siddons' merits with enthusiasm, and of Miss Baillie's powers almost with tears of rapture. Being a curious investigator of cause and effect, I never rested until I found out that this theatric rage which had seized his lordship of a sudden, was owing to a large order for hose, pantaloons, and plaids for equipping the rival clans of Campbell and Maclean, and which Siddons was sensible enough to send to the warehouse of our excellent provost.[1] . . . The Laird[2] is just gone to the High School, and it is with inexpressible feeling that I hear him trying to babble the first words of Latin, the signal of commencing serious study, for his acquirements hitherto have been under the mild dominion of a governess. I felt very like Leontes—

> 'Looking on the lines
> Of my boy's face, methought I did recoil
> Thirty good years.—[3]

And O! my dear Miss Baillie, what a tale thirty years can tell even in an uniform and unhazardous course of life! How much I have reaped that I have never sown, and sown that I have never reaped! Always, I shall think it one of the proudest and happiest circumstances of my life that enables me to subscribe myself your faithful and affectionate friend, W. S.'

Three months later, he thus communicates the result of the experiment:—

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[1] This magistrate was Mr. William Coulter (the salt-beef Amphitryon), who died in office in April 1810, and is said to have been greatly consoled on his deathbed by the prospect of so grand a funeral as must needs occur in the case of an actual Lord Provost of Auld Reekie. Scott used to *take him off* as saying at some public meeting, 'Gentlemen, though doomed to the trade of a stocking-weaver, I was born with the soul of a *Sheepio!*'—(Scipio).

[2] Young Walter Scott was called Gilnockie, the Laird of Gilnockie, or simply *the Laird*, in consequence of his childish admiration for Johnnie Armstrong, whose ruined tower is still extant at Gilnockie on the Esk, nearly opposite Netherby.

[3] Winter's Tale, Act I. Scene 2.

'*To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.*

'*Jan. 30th*, 1810.

'MY DEAR MISS BAILLIE—You have only to imagine all that you could wish to give success to a play, and your conceptions will still fall short of the complete and decided triumph of the Family Legend. The house was crowded to a most extraordinary degree; many people had come from your native capital of the west; everything that pretended to distinction, whether from rank or literature, was in the boxes, and in the pit such an aggregate mass of humanity as I have seldom if ever witnessed in the same space. It was quite obvious from the beginning, that the cause was to be very fairly tried before the public, and that if anything went wrong, no effort, even of your numerous and zealous friends, could have had much influence in guiding or restraining the general feeling. Some good-natured persons had been kind enough to propagate reports of a strong opposition, which, though I considered them as totally groundless, did not by any means lessen the extreme anxiety with which I waited the rise of the curtain. But in a short time I saw there was no ground whatever for apprehension, and yet I sat the whole time shaking for fear a scene-shifter, or a carpenter, or some of the subaltern actors, should make some blunder, and interrupt the feeling of deep and general interest which soon seized on the whole pit, box, and gallery, as Mr. Bayes has it.[1] The scene on the rock struck the utmost possible effect into the audience, and you heard nothing but sobs on all sides. The banquet-scene was equally impressive, and so was the combat. Of the greater scenes, that between Lorn and Helen in the castle of Maclean, that between Helen and her lover, and the examination of Maclean himself in Argyle's castle, were applauded to the very echo. Siddons announced the play "*for the rest of the week*," which was received not only with a thunder of applause, but with cheering and throwing up of hats and handkerchiefs. Mrs. Siddons supported her part incomparably, although just recovered from the indisposition mentioned in my last. Siddons himself played Lorn very well indeed, and moved and looked with great spirit. A Mr. Terry, who promises to be a fine performer, went through the part of the Old Earl with great taste and effect. For the rest I cannot say much, excepting that from highest to lowest they were most accurately perfect in their parts, and did their very best. Malcolm de Gray was tolerable but *stickish*—Maclean came off decently—but the conspirators were sad hounds. You are, my dear Miss Baillie, too much of a democrat in your writings; you allow life, soul, and spirit to these inferior creatures of the drama, and expect they will be the better of it. Now it was obvious to me, that the poor monsters, whose mouths are only of use to spout the vapid blank verse which your modern playwright puts into the part of the confidant and subaltern villain of his piece, did not know what to make of the energetic and poetical diction which even these subordinate departments abound with in the Legend. As the play greatly exceeded the usual length (lasting till half-past ten), we intend, when it is repeated to-night, to omit some of the passages where the weight necessarily fell on the weakest of our host, although we may hereby injure the detail of the plot. The scenery was very good, and the rock, without appearance of pantomime, was so contrived as to place Mrs. Siddons in a very precarious situation to all appearance. The dresses were more tawdry than I should have judged proper, but expensive and showy. I got my brother John's Highland recruiting party to reinforce the garrison of Inverary, and as they mustered beneath the porch of the castle, and seemed to fill the court-yard behind, the combat scene had really the appearance of reality. Siddons has been most attentive, anxious, assiduous, and docile, and had drilled his troops so well that the prompter's aid was unnecessary, and I do not believe he gave a single hint the whole night; nor were there any false or ridiculous accents or gestures even among the underlings, though

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[1] See the Rehearsal.

M 10 U

God knows they fell often far short of the true spirit. Mrs. Siddons spoke the epilogue[1] extremely well: the prologue,[2] which I will send you in its revised state, was also very well received. Mrs. Scott sends her kindest compliments of congratulation; she had a party of thirty friends in one small box, which she was obliged to watch like a clucking hen till she had gathered her whole flock, for the crowd was insufferable. I am going to see the Legend to-night, when I shall enjoy it quietly, for last night I was so much interested in its reception that I cannot say I was at leisure to attend to the feelings arising from the representation itself. People are dying to read it. If you think of suffering a single edition to be printed to gratify their curiosity, I will take care of it. But I do not advise this, because until printed no other theatres can have it before you give leave. My kind respects attend Miss Agnes Baillie, and believe me ever your obliged and faithful servant, WALTER SCOTT.

'*P.S.*—A friend of mine writes dramatic criticism now and then. I have begged him to send me a copy of the Edinburgh paper in which he inserts his lucubrations, and I will transmit it to you: he is a play-going man, and more in the habit of expressing himself on such subjects than most people.—In case you have not got a play-bill, I enclose one, because I think in my own case I should like to see it.'

The Family Legend had a continuous run of fourteen nights, and was soon afterwards printed and published by the Ballantynes.

The theatrical critic alluded to in the last of these letters was the elder of those brothers; the newspaper in which his lucubrations then appeared was the *Edinburgh Evening Courant*; and so it continued until 1817, when the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal* was purchased by the two partners of the Canongate; ever after which period it was edited by the prominent member of that firm, and from time to time was the vehicle of many fugitive pieces by Scott.

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[1] Written by Henry Mackenzie.

[2] See Scott's Poetical Works, vol. viii. p. 387.

In one of these letters there occurs, for the first time, the name of a person who soon obtained a large share of Scott's regard and confidence—the late ingenious comedian, Mr. Daniel Terry. He had received a good education, and been regularly trained as an architect; but abandoned that profession, at an early period of life, for the stage, and was now beginning to attract attention as a valuable and efficient actor in Henry Siddons's new company at Edinburgh. Already he and the Ballantynes were constant companions, and through his familiarity with them, Scott had abundant opportunities of appreciating his many excellent and agreeable qualities. He had the manners and feelings of a gentleman. Like John Kemble, he was deeply skilled in the old literature of the drama, and he rivalled Scott's own enthusiasm for the antiquities of *vertu*. Their epistolary correspondence in after-days was frequent, and will supply me with many illustrations of Scott's minor tastes and habits. As their letters lie before me, they appear as if they had all been penned by the same hand. Terry's idolatry of his new friend induced him to imitate his writing so zealously, that Scott used to say, if he were called on to swear to any document, the utmost he could venture to attest would be, that it was either in his own hand or in Terry's. The actor, perhaps unconsciously, mimicked him in other matters with hardly inferior pertinacity. His small lively features had acquired, before I knew him, a truly ludicrous cast of Scott's graver expression; he had taught his tiny eyebrow the very trick of the poet's meditative frown; and to crown all, he so habitually affected his tone and accent, that, though a native of Bath, a stranger could hardly have doubted he must be a Scotchman. These things afforded Scott and all their mutual acquaintances much diversion; but perhaps no Stoic could have helped being secretly gratified by seeing a clever and sensible man convert himself into a living type and symbol of admiration.

Charles Mathews and Terry were once thrown out of a gig together, and the former received an injury which made him halt ever afterwards, while the latter escaped unhurt. 'Dooms, *Dauniel*,' said Mathews when they next met, 'what a pity that it wasna your luck to get the game leg, mon! Your *Shirra* wad hae been the very thing, ye ken, an' ye wad hae been croose till ye war coffined!' Terry, though he did not always relish bantering on this subject, replied readily and good-humouredly by a quotation from Peter Pindar's *Bozzy and Piozzi*:—

> When Foote his leg by some misfortune broke,
> Says I to Johnson, all by way of joke,
> Sam, sir, in Paragraph will soon be clever,
> He'll take off Peter better now than ever.

Mathews's mirthful caricature of Terry's sober mimicry of Scott was one of the richest extravaganzas of his social hours; but indeed I have often seen this Proteus dramatize the whole Ballantyne group with equal success—while Rigdumfunnidos screamed with delight, and Aldiborontiphoscophornio faintly chuckled, and the Sheriff, gently smiling, pushed round his decanters.[1]

Miss Seward died in March 1809. She bequeathed her poetry to Scott, with an injunction to publish it speedily, and prefix a sketch of her life; while she made her letters (of which she had kept copies) the property of Mr. Constable, in the assurance that due regard for his own interests would forthwith place the whole collection before the admiring world. Scott superintended accordingly the edition of the lady's verses, which was published in three volumes in August 1810, by John Ballantyne and Co.; and Constable lost no time in announcing her correspondence, which appeared a year later, in six volumes. The following letter alludes to these produc tions, as well as a comedy by Mr. Henry Siddons, which he had recently brought out on the Edinburgh stage; and lastly, to the Lady of the Lake, the printing of which had by this time made great progress.

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[1] By the way, perhaps the very richest article in Mathews's social budget was the scene alleged to have occurred when he himself communicated to the two Ballantynes the new titles which the Sheriff had conferred on them. Rigdum's satisfaction with his own cap and bells, and the other's indignant incredulity, passing by degrees into tragical horror, made a delicious contrast.—[1839.]

'*To Miss Joanna Baillie.*

'EDINBURGH, *March* 18, 1810.

'Nothing, my dear Miss Baillie, can loiter in my hands, when you are commanding officer. I have put the play in progress through the press, and find my publishers, the Ballantynes, had previously determined to make Mr. Longman, the proprietor of your other works, the offer of this. All that can be made of it in such a cause certainly shall, and the booksellers shall be content with as little profit as can in reason be expected. I understand the trade well, and will take care of this. Indeed, I believe the honour weighs more with the booksellers here than the profit of a single play. So much for business. You are quite right in the risk I run of failure in a third poem; yet I think I understand the British public well enough to set every sail towards the popular breeze. One set of folks pique themselves upon sailing in the wind's eye—another class drive right before it; now I would neither do one or t'other, but endeavour to go, as the sailors express it, *upon* a wind, and make use of it to carry me my own way, instead of going precisely in its direction; or, to speak in a dialect with which I am more familiar, I would endeavour to make my horse carry me, instead of attempting to carry my horse. I have a vainglorious presentiment of success upon this occasion, which may very well deceive me, but which I would hardly confess to anybody but you, nor perhaps to you neither, unless I knew you would find it out whether I told it you or no,—

You are a sharp observer, and you look
Quite through the eyes of men.—

'I plead guilty to the charge of ill-breeding to Miss * * * *. The despair which I used to feel on receiving poor Miss Seward's letters, whom I really liked, gave me a most unsentimental horror for sentimental letters. The crossest thing I ever did in my life was to poor dear Miss Seward; she wrote me in an evil hour (I had never seen her, mark that!) a long and most passionate epistle upon the death of a dear friend, whom I had never seen neither, concluding with a charge not to attempt answering the said letter, for she was dead to the world, etc. etc. etc. Never were commands more literally obeyed. I remained as silent as the grave, till the lady made so many enquiries after me, that I was afraid of my death being prematurely announced by a sonnet or an elegy. When I did see her, however, she interested me very much, and I am now doing penance for my ill-breeding, by submitting to edit her posthumous poetry, most of which is absolutely execrable. This, however, is the least of my evils, for when she proposed this bequest to me, which I could not in decency refuse, she combined it with a request that I would publish her whole literary correspondence. This I declined on principle, having a particular aversion at perpetuating that sort of gossip; but what availed it? Lo! to ensure the publication, she left it to an Edinburgh bookseller; and I anticipate the horror of seeing myself advertised for a live poet like a wild beast on a painted streamer, for I understand all her friends are depicted therein in body, mind, and manners. So much for the risks of sentimental correspondence.

'Siddons' play was truly flat, but not unprofitable; he contrived to get it well propped in the acting, and—though it was such a thing as if you or I had written it (supposing, that is, what in your case, and I think even in my own, is impossible) would have been damned seventy-fold,—yet it went through with applause. Such is the humour of the multitude; and they will quarrel with venison for being dressed a day sooner than fashion requires, and batten on a neck of mutton, because, on the whole, it is rather better than they expected; however, Siddons is a good lad, and deserves success, through whatever channel it comes. His mother is here just now. I was quite shocked to see her, for the two last years have made a dreadful inroad both on voice and person; she has, however, a very bad cold. I hope she will be able to act Jane de Montfort, which we have long planned.—Very truly yours, W. S.'

CHAPTER XX

Affair of Thomas Scott's Extractorship discussed in the House of Lords—Speeches of Lord Lauderdale, Lord Melville, etc.—Lord Holland at the Friday Club—Publication of The Lady of the Lake—Correspondence concerning Versification with Ellis and Canning—The Poem criticised by Jeffrey and Mackintosh—Letters to Southey and Morritt—Anecdotes from James Ballantyne's Memoranda.

1810

THERE occurred, while the later cantos of the Lady of the Lake were advancing through the press, an affair which gave Scott so much uneasiness, that I must not pass it in silence. Each Clerk of Session had in those days the charge of a particular *office* or department in the Great Register House of Scotland, and the appointment of the subalterns, who therein recorded and extracted the decrees of the Supreme Court, was in his hands. Some of these situations, remunerated, according to a fixed rate of fees, by the parties concerned in the suits before the Court, were valuable, and considered not at all below the pretensions of gentlemen who had been regularly trained for the higher branches of the law. About the time when Thomas Scott's affairs as a Writer to the Signet fell into derangement, but before they were yet hopeless, a post became vacant in his brother's *office*, which yielded an average income of £400, and which he would very willingly have accepted. The poet, however, considered a respectable man, who had grown grey at an inferior desk in the same department, as entitled to promotion, and exerted the right of patronage in his favour accordingly, bestowing on his brother the place which this person left. It was worth about £250 a year, and its duties being entirely mechanical, might be in great part, and often had been in former times entirely, discharged by deputy. Mr. Thomas Scott's appointment to this *Extractorship* took place at an early stage of the proceedings of that Commission for enquiring into the Scotch System of Judicature, which had the poet for its secretary. Thomas, very soon afterwards, was compelled to withdraw from Edinburgh, and retired, as has been mentioned, to the Isle of Man, leaving his official duties to the care of a substitute, who was to allow him a certain share of the fees, until circumstances should permit his return. It was not, however, found so easy, as he and his friends had anticipated, to wind up his accounts, and settle with his creditors. Time passed on, and being an active man, in the prime vigour of life, he accepted a commission in the Manx Fencibles, a new corps raised by the Lord of that island, the Duke of Athol, who willingly availed himself of the military experience which Mr. Scott had acquired in the course of his long connexion with the Edinburgh Volunteers. These Manx Fencibles, however, were soon dissolved, and Thomas Scott, now engaged in the peaceful occupation of collecting materials for a History of the Isle of Man, to which his brother had strongly directed his views, was anxiously expecting a final arrangement, which might allow him to re-establish himself in Edinburgh, and resume his seat in the Register House, when he received the intelligence that the Commission of Judicature had resolved to abolish that, among many other similar posts. This was a severe blow; but it was announced, at the same time, that the Commission meant to recommend to Parliament a scheme of compensation for the functionaries who were to be discharged at their suggestion, and that his retired allowance would probably amount to £130 per annum.

In the spring of 1810, the Commission gave in its report, and was dissolved; and a bill, embodying the details of an extensive reform, founded on its suggestions, was laid before the House of Commons, who adopted most of its provisions, and among others passed, without hesitation, the clauses respecting compensation for the holders of abolished offices. But when the bill reached the House of Lords, several of these clauses were severely reprobated by some Peers of the Whig party, and the case of Thomas Scott, in particular, was represented as a gross and flagrant *job*. The following extract from Hansard's Debates will save me the trouble of further details:—

'THOMAS SCOTT.

'THE EARL OF LAUDERDALE moved an amendment, "That those only be remunerated who were mentioned in the schedule." The application of this amendment was towards the compensation intended for Mr. Thomas Scott, the brother of Walter Scott. It appeared the former was appointed to the office of an Extractor at a time when it must have been foreseen that those offices would be abolished. Mr. Thomas Scott had not been connected previously with that sort of situation, but was recruiting for the Manx Fencibles in the Isle of Man at the time, and had not served the office, but performed its duties through the means of a deputy. He considered this transaction a perfect job. By the present bill Mr. T. Scott would have £130 for life as an indemnity for an office, the duties of which he never had performed, while those clerks who had laboured for twenty years had no adequate remuneration.

'VISCOUNT MELVILLE supported the general provisions of the bill. With respect to Mr. T. Scott, he certainly had been in business, had met with misfortunes, and on account of his circumstances went to the Isle of Man; but with respect to his appointment, this was the fact: a situation in the same office [of the Register House] with that of his brother, of £400, became vacant, and he [Walter Scott] thought it his duty to promote a person who had meritoriously filled the situation which was afterwards granted to Mr. T. Scott. His brother was therefore so disinterested as to have appointed him to the inferior instead of the superior situation. The noble viscount saw no injustice in the case, and there was no partiality but what was excusable.

'LORD HOLLAND thought no man who knew him would suspect that he was unfavourable to men of literature; on the contrary, he felt a great esteem for the literary character of Walter Scott. He and his colleagues ever thought it their duty to reward literary merit without regard to political opinions; and he wished he could pay the same compliment to the noble and learned viscount, for he must ever recollect that the poet Burns, of immortal memory, had been shamefully neglected. But with respect to Mr. Thomas Scott, the question was quite different, for he was placed in a situation which he and his brother knew at the time would be abolished ; and from Parliament he claimed an indemnity for what could not be pronounced any loss. It was unjust as regarded others, and improper as it respected Parliament.

'The amendment was then proposed and negatived. The bill was accordingly read the third time and passed.'—HANSARD, *June* 1810.

I shall now extract various passages from Scott's letters to his brother and other friends, which will show what his feelings were while this affair continued under agitation.

'*To Thomas Scott, Esq., Douglas, Isle of Man.*

'EDINBURGH, 25*th May* 1810.

'MY DEAR TOM—I write under some anxiety for your interest, though I sincerely hope it is groundless. The devil or James Gibson[1] has put it into Lord Lauderdale's head to challenge your annuity in the House of Lords on account of your non-residence, and your holding a commission in the militia. His lordship kept his intention as secret as possible, but fortunately it reached the kind and friendly ear of Colin Mackenzie. Lord Melville takes the matter up stoutly, and I have little doubt will carry his point, unless the whole bill is given up for the season, which some concurring opposition from different quarters renders not impossible. In that case, you must, at the expense of a little cash and time, shew face in Edinburgh for a week or two, and attend your office. But I devoutly hope all will be settled by the bill being passed as it now stands. This is truly a most unworthy exertion of private spite and malice, but I trust it will be in vain.'

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[1] James Gibson, Esq., W.S. (now Sir James Gibson-Craig of Riccarton, Bart.) had always been regarded as one of the most able and active of the Scotch Whigs—whose acknowledged chief in those days was the Earl of Lauderdale.

'EDINBURGH, *June 12th.*

'DEAR TOM—I have the pleasure to acquaint you that I have every reason to believe that the bill will pass this week. It has been *committed;* upon which occasion Lord Lauderdale stated various objections, all of which were repelled. He then adverted to your case with some sufficiently bitter observations. Lord Melville advised him to reserve his epithets till he was pleased to state his cause, as he would pledge himself to show that they were totally inapplicable to the transaction. The Duke of Montrose also intimated his intention to defend it, which I take very kind of his Grace, as he went down on purpose, and declared his resolution to attend whenever the business should be stirred. So much for

The Lord of Graham, by every chief adored,
Who boasts his native philabeg restored.[1]

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EDINBURGH, 21*st June* 1810.

'MY DEAR TOM—The bill was read a third time in the House of Lords, on which occasion Lord Lauderdale made his attack, which Lord Melville answered. There was not much said on either side: Lord Holland supported Lord Lauderdale, and the bill passed without a division. So you have fairly doubled Cape Lauderdale. I believe his principal view was to insult my feelings, in which he has been very unsuccessful, for I thank God I feel nothing but the most hearty contempt both for the attack and the sort of paltry malice by which alone it could be dictated.'

The next letter is addressed to an old friend of Scott's, who, though a stout Whig, had taken a lively interest in the success of his brother's parliamentary business :—

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[1] These lines are slightly altered from the Rolliad, p. 308. The Duke had obtained the repeal of an Act of Parliament forbidding the use of the Highland garb.

'*To John Richardson, Esq., Fludyer Street, Westminster.*

'EDINBURGH, *3rd July* 1810.

'MY DEAR RICHARDSON—I ought before now to have written you my particular thanks for your kind attention to the interest which I came so strangely and unexpectedly to have in the passing of the Judicature Bill. The only purpose which I suppose Lord Lauderdale had in view was to state charges which could neither be understood nor refuted, and to give me a little pain by dragging my brother's misfortunes into public notice. If the last was his aim, I am happy to say it has most absolutely miscarried, for I have too much contempt for the motive which dictated his Lordship's eloquence, to feel much for its thunders. My brother loses by the bill from £150 to £200, which no power short of an Act of Parliament could have taken from him, and far from having a view to the compensation, he is a considerable loser by its being substituted for the actual receipts of his office. I assure you I am very sensible of your kind and friendly activity and zeal in my brother's behalf.

'I received the Guerras[1] safe; it is a fine copy, and I think very cheap, considering how difficult it is now to procure foreign books. I shall be delighted to have the Traité des Tournois. I propose, on the 12th, setting forth for the West Highlands, with the desperate purpose of investigating the caves of Staffa, Egg, and Skye. There was a time when this was a heroic undertaking, and when the return of Samuel Johnson from achieving it was hailed by the Edinburgh literati with "per varios casus," and other scraps of classical gratulation equally new and elegant. But the harvest of glory has been entirely reaped by the early discoverers; and in an age when every London citizen makes Lochlomond his wash-pot, and throws his shoe over Ben-Nevis, a man may endure every hardship, and expose himself to every danger of the Highland seas, from sea-sickness to the jaws of the great sea-snake, without gaining a single leaf of laurel for his pains.

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[1] A copy of the *Guerras Civiles de Granada.*

'The best apology for bestowing all this tediousness upon you is, that John Burnet is dinning into the ears of the Court a botheration about the politics of the magnificent city of Culross. But I will release you sooner than I fear I shall escape myself, with the assurance that I am ever yours most truly, WALTER SCOTT.'

I conclude the affair of Thomas Scott with a brief extract from a letter which his brother addressed to him a few weeks later:—'Lord Holland has been in Edinburgh, and we met accidentally at a public party. He made up to me, but I remembered his part in your affair, and *cut* him with as little remorse as an old pen.' The meeting here alluded to occurred at a dinner of the *Friday Club*, at Fortune's Tavern, to which Lord Holland was introduced by Mr. Thomas Thomson. Two gentlemen who were present inform me that they distinctly remember a very painful scene, for which, knowing Scott's habitual good-nature and urbanity, they had been wholly unprepared. One of them (Lord Jeffrey) adds, that this was the only example of rudeness he ever witnessed in him in the course of a lifelong familiarity. I have thought it due to truth and justice not to omit this disagreeable passage in Scott's life, which shows how even his mind could at times be unhinged and perverted by the malign influence of political spleen. It is consolatory to add that he enjoyed much agreeable intercourse in after-days with Lord Holland, and retained no feelings of resentment towards any other of the Whig gentlemen named in the preceding correspondence.[1]

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[1] I subjoin a list of the Members of *The Friday Club*, which was instituted in June 1803 (on the model, I believe, of Johnson's at the Turk's Head), down to the period of Scott's death. The others marked, like his name, by an asterisk, are also dead.

1803 *Sir James Hall
*Professor Dugald Stewart
*Professor John Playfair
Rev. Arch. Alison
Rev. Sydney Smith
*Rev. Peter Elmslie
*Alex. Irving (Lord Newton)
*Wm. Erskine (Lord Kinnedder)
George Cranstoun (Lord Corehouse)
*Walter Scott

While these affairs were still in progress, the poem of the Lady of the Lake was completed. Scott was at the same time arranging the materials, and superintending the printing, of the collection entitled 'English Minstrelsy,' in which several of his own minor poems first appeared, and which John Ballantyne and Co. also published in the summer of 1810. The Swift, too (to say nothing of reviews and the like), was going on; and so was the Somers. A new edition of the Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border was moreover at press, and in it the editor included a few features of novelty, particularly Mr. Morritt's spirited ballad of the *Curse of Moy*. He gives a lively description of his occupations, in the following letter addressed to that gentleman:—

'*To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq.*, 24 *Portland Place, London.*

'EDINBURGH, 2*nd March* 1810.

'MY DEAR MORRITT—You are very good to remember such a false knave as I am, who have omitted so long to thank you for a letter, bringing me the assurances of your health and remembrance, which I do not value the less deeply and sincerely for my seeming neglect. Truth is, I do not eat the bread of idleness. But I was born a Scotchman, and a bare one, and was therefore born to fight my way with my left hand where

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1803 Thomas Thomson
Dr. John Thomson
John A. Murray (Lord Advocate in 1835)
Henry Brougham (Lord Brougham)
*Henry Mackenzie
H. Mackenzie (Lord Mackenzie)
*Malcolm Laing
Henry Cockburn (Lord Cockburn)
John Richardson
Francis Jeffrey (Lord Jeffrey)
William Clerk
1804*Alex. Hamilton
*Dr. Coventry
*Professor John Robison
George Strickland
*Professor Dalzell
*Lord Webb Seymour
*Earl of Selkirk
*Lord Glenbervie
1807 Rev. John Thomson
1810 John Jeffrey
1811 T. F. Kennedy
J. Fullerton (Lord Fullerton)
John Allen
*Francis Horner
Thomas Campbell
1812*George Wilson
1814*Dr. John Gordon
1816 Andrew Rutherford
1817*James Keay
1825 Leonard Horner
Professor Pillans
1826 Count M. de Flahault
*D. Cathcart (Lord Alloway)
1827 Earl of Minto
William Murray
1830 Hon. Mountstuart Elphinstone

my right failed me, and with my teeth, if they were both cut off. This is but a bad apology for not answering your kindness, yet not so bad when you consider that it was only admitted as a cause of procrastination, and that I have been—let me see—I have been Secretary to the Judicature Commission, which sat daily during all the Christmas vacation I have been editing Swift, and correcting the press, at the rate of six sheets a week. I have been editing Somers at the rate of four ditto ditto. I have written reviews—I have written songs—I have made selections—I have superintended rehearsals—and all this independent of visiting, and of my official duty, which occupies me four hours every working day except Mondays—and independent of a new poem with which I am threatening the world. This last employment is not the most prudent, but I really cannot well help myself. My office, though a very good one for Scotland, is only held in reversion; nor do I at present derive a shilling from it. I must expect that a fresh favourite of the public will supersede me, and my philosophy being very great on the point of poetical fame, I would fain, at the risk of hastening my own downfall, avail myself of the favourable moment to make some further provision for my little people. Moreover, I cannot otherwise honestly indulge myself in some of the luxuries which, when long gratified, became a sort of pseudo necessaries. As for the terrible parodies[1] which have come forth, I can only say with Benedict, "A college of such witmongers cannot flout me out of my humour." Had I been conscious of one place about my temper, were it even, metaphorically speaking, the tip of my heel, vulnerable to this sort of aggression, I have that respect for mine own ease, that I would have shunned being a candidate for public applause, as I would avoid snatching a honeycomb from among a hive of live bees. My present attempt is a poem, partly Highland—the scene Loch Katrine, *tempore Jacobi quinti*.

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[1] I suppose this is an allusion to 'The Lay of the Scotch Fiddle,' 'The Goblin Groom,' and some other productions, like them, long since forgotten.

If I fail, as Lady Macbeth gallantly says, I fail, and there is only a story murdered to no purpose; and if I succeed, why then, as the song says—

Up with the bonnie blue bonnet,
The dirk and the feather and a'.

'I hope to show this ditty to you soon in Portland Place, for it seems determined I must go to London, though the time is not fixed. The pleasure of meeting you and half-a-dozen other friends reconciles me to this change of plan, for had I answered your letter the day I received it, I would have said nothing was less likely than my going to town in spring. I hope it will be so late as to afford me an opportunity of visiting Rokeby and Greta Side on my return. The *felon sow* herself could not think of them with more affection than I do; and though I love Portland Place dearly, yet I would fain enjoy both. But this must be as *the Fates and Destinies and Sisters three* determine. Charlotte hopes to accompany me, and is particularly gratified by the expectation of meeting Mrs. Morritt. We think of our sunny days at Rokeby with equal delight.

'Miss Baillie's play went off capitally here, notwithstanding her fond and over-credulous belief in a Creator of the world. The fact is so generally believed that it is man who makes the deity, that I am surprised it has never been maintained as a corollary that the knife and fork make the fingers. We wept till our hearts were sore, and applauded till our hands were blistered—what could we more?—and this in crowded theatres.

'I send a copy of the poetical collection, not for you, my good friend, because you would not pay your literary subscription,[1] but for Mrs. Morritt. I thought of leaving it as I came through Yorkshire, but as I can get *as yet* an office frank, it will be safer in your charge. By a parity of reasoning, you will receive a copy of the new edition of the Minstrelsy just finished, and about to be shipped, enriched with your Curse of Moy, which is very much admired by all to whom I have shown it. I am sorry that dear —— —— is so far from you. There is something about her that makes me think of her with a mixture of affection and anxiety—such a pure and excellent heart, joined to such native and fascinating manners, cannot pass unprotected through your fashionable scenes without much hazard of a twinge at least, if not a stab. I remember we talked over this subject once while riding on the banks of Tees, and somehow (I cannot tell why) it falls like a death-bell on my ear. She is too artless for the people that she has to live amongst. This is all vile croaking, so I will end it by begging ten times love and compliments to Mrs. Morritt, in which Charlotte heartily joins.—Believe me ever, dear Morritt, yours most faithfully,

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[1] Scott alludes to some translations of Italian poetry which he had wished for Mr. Morritt's permission to publish in the 'English Minstrelsy.'

'WALTER SCOTT.'

Early in May the Lady of the Lake came out—as her two elder sisters had done—in all the majesty of quarto, with every accompanying grace of typography, and with, moreover, an engraved frontispiece of Saxon's portrait of Scott; the price of the book, two guineas. For the copyright the poet had nominally received 2000 guineas, but as John Ballantyne and Co. retained three-fourths of the property to themselves (Miller of London purchasing the other fourth), the author's profits were, or should have been, more than this.

It ought to be mentioned that during the progress of the poem his feelings towards Constable were so much softened that he authorized John Ballantyne to ask, in his name, that experienced bookseller's advice respecting the amount of the first impression, the method of advertising, and other professional details. Mr. Constable readily gave the assistance thus requested, and would willingly have taken any share they pleased in the adventure. The property had been disposed of before these communications occurred, and the triumphant success of the *coup d'essai* of the new firm was sufficient to close Scott's ears for a season against any propositions of the like kind from the house at the Cross; but from this time there was no return of anything like personal ill-will between the parties. One article of this correspondence will be sufficient.

'*To Mr. Constable.*

'CASTLE STREET, 13*th March* 1810.

'DEAR SIR—I am sure if Mr. Hunter is really sorry for the occasion of my long absence from your shop, I shall be happy to forget all disagreeable circumstances, and visit it often as a customer and amateur. I think it necessary to add (before departing from this subject, and I hope for ever) that it is not in my power to restore our relative situation as author and publishers, because, upon the breach between us, a large capital was diverted by the Ballantynes from another object, and invested in their present bookselling concern, under an express assurance from me of such support as my future publications could give them; which is a pledge not to be withdrawn without grounds which I cannot anticipate. But this is not a consideration which need prevent our being friends and well-wishers.—Yours truly, W. SCOTT.'

Mr. Robert Cadell, the publisher of this Memoir, who was then a young man in training for his profession in Edinburgh, retains a strong impression of the interest which the Lady of the Lake excited there for two or three months before it was on the counter. 'James Ballantyne,' he says, 'read the cantos from time to time to select coteries, as they advanced at press. Common fame was loud in their favour; a great poem was on all hands anticipated. I do not recollect that any of all the author's works was ever looked for with more intense anxiety, or that any one of them excited a more extraordinary sensation when it did appear. The whole country rang with the praises of the poet—crowds set off to view the scenery of Loch Katrine, till then comparatively unknown; and as the book came out just before the season for excursions, every house and inn in that neighbourhood was crammed with a constant succession of visitors. It is a well-ascertained fact that from the date of the publication of the Lady of the Lake the post-horse duty in Scotland rose in an extraordinary degree, and indeed it continued to do so regularly for a number of years, the author's succeeding works keeping up the enthusiasm for our scenery which he had thus originally created.'

I owe to the same correspondent the following details:—'The quarto edition of 2050 copies disappeared instantly, and was followed in the course of the same year by four editions in octavo, viz. one of 3000, a second of 3250, and a third and a fourth each of 6000 copies; thus, in the space of a few months, the extraordinary number of 20,000 copies were disposed of. In the next year (1811) there was another edition of 3000; there was one of 2000 in 1814; another of 2000 in 1815; one of 2000 again in 1819; and two, making between them 2500, appeared in 1825: Since which time the Lady of the Lake, in collective editions of his poetry, and in separate issues, must have circulated to the extent of at least 20,000 copies more.' So that, down to the month of July 1836, the legitimate sale in Great Britain has been not less than 50,000 copies.

I have little to add to what the Introduction of 1830, and some letters already extracted, have told us concerning the history of the composition of this poem. Indeed the coincidences of expression and illustration in the Introduction, and those private letters written twenty years before, are remarkable. In both we find him quoting Montrose's lines, and in both he quotes also 'Up wi' the bonnie blue bonnet,' etc. In truth, both letters and Introduction were literal transcripts of his usual conversation on the subject. 'A lady,' he says, 'to whom I was nearly related, and with whom I lived during her whole life on the most brotherly terms of affection, was residing with me (at Ashestiel) when the work was in progress, and used to ask me what I could possibly do to rise so early in the morning. At last I told her the subject of my meditations; and I can never forget the anxiety and affection expressed in her reply. "Do not be so rash," she said, "my dearest cousin. You are already popular—more so perhaps than you yourself will believe, or than even I or other partial friends can fairly allow to your merit. You stand high—do not rashly attempt to climb higher and incur the risk of a fall; for, depend upon it, a favourite will not be permitted even to stumble with impunity." I replied to this affectionate expostulation in the words of Montrose:—

He either fears his fate too much,
  Or his deserts are small,
Who dares not put it to the touch,
  To win or lose it all.

"If I fail," I said—for the dialogue is strong in my recollection, "it is a sign that I ought never to have succeeded, and *I will write prose for life:* you shall see no change in my temper, nor will I eat a single meal the worse. But if I succeed—

Up wi' the bonnie blue bonnet,
The dirk and the feather an' a'!"

Afterwards I showed my critic the first canto, which reconciled her to my imprudence.'—The lady here alluded to was no doubt Miss Christian Rutherford, his mother's sister, who, as I have already mentioned, was so little above his age, that they seem always to have lived together on the terms of equality indicated in her use of the word 'cousin' in the dialogue before us. She was, however, about as devout a Shakspearian as her nephew, and the use of *cousin*, for kinsman in general, is common to all our elder dramatists.[1]

He says, in the same essay, 'I remember that about the same time a friend started in to "heeze up my hope," like the minstrel in the old song. He was bred a farmer, but a man of powerful understanding, natural good taste, and warm poetical feeling, perfectly competent to supply the wants of an imperfect or irregular education. He was a passionate admirer of field sports, which we often pursued together. As this friend happened to dine with me at Ashestiel one day, I took the opportunity of reading to him the first canto of the Lady of the Lake, in order to ascertain the effect the poem was likely to produce upon a person who was but too favourable a representative of readers at large. His reception of my recitation, or prelection, was rather singular. He placed his hand across his brow, and listened with great attention through the whole account of the stag-hunt, till the dogs throw themselves into the lake to follow their master, who embarks with Ellen Douglas. He then started up with a sudden exclamation, struck his hand on the table, and declared, in a voice of censure calculated for the occasion, that the dogs must have been totally ruined by being permitted to take the water after such a severe chase. I own I was much encouraged by the species of reverie which had possessed so zealous a follower of the sports of the ancient Nimrod, who had been completely surprised out of all doubts of the reality of the tale.' Scott adds—'Another of his remarks gave me less pleasure. He detected the identity of the king with the wandering knight, Fitz-James, when he winds his bugle to summon his attendants. He was probably thinking of the lively but somewhat licentious old ballad in which the *dénouement* of a royal intrigue' [one of James V. himself by the way] 'takes place as follows:—

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[1] Thus Lady Capulet exclaims, on seeing the corpse of Tybalt,—

Tybalt, my cousin!—O my brother's child!

'He took a bugle from his side,
He blew both loud and shrill,
And four-and-twenty belted knights
Came skipping owre the hill.

'Then he took out a little knife,
Let a' his duddies fa',
And he was the bravest gentleman
That was amang them a'.
And we'll go no more a roving,' etc.

This discovery, as Mr. Pepys says of the rent in his camlet cloak, "was but a trifle, yet it troubled me"; and I was at a good deal of pains to efface any marks by which I thought my secret could be traced before the conclusion, when I relied on it with the same hope of producing effect with which the Irish postboy is said to reserve a "trot for the avenue."'[1]

I believe the shrewd critic here introduced was the poet's excellent cousin, Charles Scott, now laird of Knowesouth. The story of the Irish postilion's trot he owed to Mr. Moore.

In their reception of this poem, the critics were for once in full harmony with each other, and with the popular voice. The article in the Quarterly was written by George Ellis; but its eulogies, though less discriminative, are not a whit more emphatic than those of Mr. Jeffrey in the rival Review. Indeed, I have always considered this last paper as the best specimen of contemporary criticism on Scott's poetry; and I shall therefore indulge myself with quoting here two of its paragraphs:—

> There is nothing in Mr. Scott of the severe and majestic style of Milton—or of the terse and fine composition of Pope—or of the elaborate elegance and melody of Campbell—or even of the flowing and redundant diction of Southey,—but there is a medley of bright and glowing images, set carelessly and loosely together—a diction tinged successively with the careless richness of Shakspeare, the harshness and antique simplicity of the old romances, the homeliness of vulgar ballads and anecdotes, and the sentimental glitter of the most modern poetry—passing from the borders of the ludicrous to those of the sublime—alternately minute and energetic—sometimes artificial, and frequently negligent, but always full of spirit and vivacity—abounding in images that are striking at first sight to minds of every contexture—and never expressing a sentiment which it can cost the most ordinary reader any exertion to comprehend. Upon the whole, we are inclined to think more highly of the Lady of the Lake than of either of its author's former publications. We are more sure, however, that it has fewer faults than that it has greater beauties; and as its beauties bear a strong resemblance to those with which the public has been already made familiar in these celebrated works, we should not be surprised if its popularity were less splendid and remarkable. For our own parts, however, we are of opinion that it will be oftener read hereafter than either of them; and that if it had appeared first in the series, their reception would have been less favourable than that which it has experienced. It is more polished in its diction, and more regular in its versification; the story is constructed with infinitely more skill and address; there is a greater proportion of pleasing and

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[1] Introduction to the Lady of the Lake—1830.

tender passages, with much less antiquarian detail: and, upon the whole, a larger variety of characters, more artfully and judiciously contrasted. There is nothing so fine, perhaps, as the battle in Marmion—or so picturesque as some of the scattered sketches in the Lay; but there is a richness and a spirit in the whole piece, which does not pervade either of those poems—a profusion of incident, and a shifting brilliancy of colouring, that reminds us of the witchery of Ariosto—and a constant elasticity, and occasional energy, which seem to belong more peculiarly to the author now before us.

It is honourable to Mr. Scott's genius that he has been able to interest the public so deeply with this third presentment of the same chivalrous scenes; but we cannot help thinking, that both his glory and our gratification would have been greater, if he had changed his hand more completely, and actually given us a true Celtic story, with all its drapery and accompaniments, in a corresponding style of decoration. Such a subject, we are persuaded, has very great capabilities, and only wants to be introduced to public notice by such a hand as Mr. Scott's, to make a still more powerful impression than he has already effected by the resurrection of the tales of romance. There are few persons, we believe, of any degree of poetical susceptibility, who have wandered among the secluded valleys of the Highlands, and contemplated the singular people by whom they are still tenanted—with their love of music and of song—their hardy and irregular life, so unlike the unvarying toils of the Saxon mechanic—their devotion to their chiefs—their wild and lofty traditions—their national enthusiasm—the melancholy grandeur of the scenes they inhabit—and the multiplied superstitions which still linger among them—without feeling that there is no existing people so well adapted for the purposes of poetry, or so capable of furnishing the occasions of new and striking inventions.

We are persuaded, that if Mr. Scott's powerful and creative genius were to be turned in good earnest to such a subject, something might be produced still more impressive and original than even this age has yet witnessed.[1]

The second of these paragraphs is a strikingly prophetic one; and if the details already given negative the prediction of the first,—namely, that the immediate popularity of the Lady of the Lake would be less remarkable than that of the Lay or Marmion had been—its other prediction, that the new poem would be 'oftener read hereafter than either of the former,' has, I believe, proved just. The Lay, if I may venture to state the creed now established, is, I should say, generally considered as the most natural and original, Marmion as the most powerful and splendid, the Lady of the Lake as the most interesting, romantic, picturesque, and graceful of his great poems.

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[1] It may interest the reader to compare with this passage a brief extract from Sir James Mackintosh's Indian Diary of 1811:—

'The subject of The Lady,' says he, 'is a common Highland irruption, but at a point where the neighbourhood of the Lowlands affords the best contrast of manners—where the scenery affords the noblest subject of description—and where the wild clan is so near to the Court, that their robberies can be connected with the romantic adventures of a disguised king, an exiled lord, and a high-born beauty. The whole narrative is very fine. There are not so many splendid passages for quotation as in the two former poems. This may indeed silence the objections of the critics, but I doubt whether it will promote the popularity of the poem. It has nothing so good as the Address to Scotland, or the Death of Marmion.'—*Life of Mackintosh*, vol. ii. p. 82.

Of the private opinions expressed at the time of its first publication by his distinguished literary friends, and expressed with an ease and candour equally honourable to them and to him, that of Mr. Southey was, as far as I know, the only one which called forth anything like a critical reply; and even here, *more suo*, he seems glad to turn from his own productions to those of his correspondent. It will be seen that Mr. Southey had recently put forth the first volume of his history of Brazil; that his Kehama was then in the Ballantyne press; and that he had mentioned to Scott his purpose of writing another poem under the title of 'Don Pelayo'—which in the issue was exchanged for that of 'Roderick the Last of the Goths.'

'*To Robert Southey, Esq., Durham.*

'EDINBURGH, *May* 20, 1810.

'MY DEAR SOUTHEY—I am very sensible of the value of your kind approbation of my efforts, and trust I shall, under such good auspices, keep my ground with the public. I have studied their taste as much as a thing so variable can be calculated upon, and I hope I have again given them an acceptable subject of entertainment. What you say of the songs is very just, and also of the measure. But, on the one hand, I wish to make a difference between my former poems and this new attempt, in the general tenor of versification, and on the other, having an eye to the benefits derivable from the change of stanza, I omitted no opportunity which could be given or taken, of converting my dog-trot into a hop-step-and-jump. I am impatient to see Kehama; James Ballantyne, who has a good deal of tact, speaks very highly of the poetical fire and beauty which pervades it; and, considering the success of Sir William Jones, I should think the Hindhu mythology would not revolt the common readers, for in that lies your only danger. As for Don Pelayo, it should be exquisite under your management: the subject is noble, the parties finely contrasted in manners, dress, religion, and all that the poet desires to bring into action; and your complete knowledge of every historian who has touched upon the period, promises the reader at once delight and instruction.

'Twenty times twenty thanks for the History of Brazil, which has been my amusement, and solace, and spring of instruction for this month past. I have always made it my reading-book after dinner, between the removal of the cloth and our early tea-time. There is only one defect I can point out, and that applies to the publishers—I mean the want of a good map. For, to tell you the truth, with my imperfect atlas of South America, I can hardly trace these same *Tups* of yours (which in our Border dialect signifies *rams*), with all their divisions and subdivisions, through so many ramifications, without a *carte de pays*. The history itself is most singularly entertaining, and throws new light upon a subject which we have hitherto understood very imperfectly. Your labour must have been immense, to judge from the number of curious facts quoted, and unheard-of authorities which you have collected. I have traced the achievements of the Portuguese adventurers with greater interest than I remember to have felt since, when a schoolboy, I first perused the duodecimo collection of Voyages and Discoveries called the World Displayed—a sensation which I thought had been long dead within me; for, to say the truth, the philanthropic and cautious conduct of modern discoverers, though far more amiable, is less entertaining than that of the old Buccaneers, and Spaniards, and

Portuguese, who went to conquer and achieve adventures, and met with strange chances of fate in consequence, which could never have befallen a well-armed boat's crew, not trusting themselves beyond their watering-place, or trading with the natives on the principles of mercantile good faith.

'I have some thoughts of a journey and voyage to the Hebrides this year, but if I don't make that out, I think I shall make a foray into your northern counties, go to see my friend Morritt at Greta Bridge, and certainly cast myself Keswick-ways either going or coming. I have some literary projects to talk over with you, for the re-editing some of our ancient classical romances and poetry, and so forth. I have great command of our friends the Ballantynes, and I think, so far as the filthy lucre of gain is concerned, I could make a very advantageous bargain for the time which must necessarily be bestowed in such a labour, besides doing an agreeable thing for ourselves, and a useful service to literature. What is become of Coleridge's *Friend?* I hope he had a letter from me, enclosing my trifling subscription. How does *our* friend, Wordsworth? I won't write to him, because he hates letter-writing as much as I do; but I often think on him, and always with affection. If you make any stay at Durham let me know, as I wish you to know my friend Surtees of Mainsforth.[1] He is an excellent antiquary, some of the rust of which study has clung to his manners; but he is good-hearted, and you would make the *summer eve* (for so by the courtesy of the kalendar we must call these abominable easterly blighting afternoons) short between you. I presume you are with my friend Dr. Southey, who, I hope, has not quite forgotten me, in which faith I beg kind compliments to him, and am ever yours most truly, WALTER SCOTT.'

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[1] This amiable gentleman, author of the History of Durham, in three volumes folio,—one of the most learned as well as interesting works of its class,—was an early and dear friend of Scott's. He died at the family seat of Mainsforth, near Durham, 11th February 1834, in his 55th year. A club has since been instituted for the publication of ancient documents, etc., connected with the History of the English Border, and called, in honour of his memory, *The Surtees Club.*

George Ellis having undertaken, at Gifford's request, to review the Lady of the Lake, does not appear to have addressed any letter to the poet upon the subject, until after his article had appeared. He then says simply, that he had therein expressed his candid sentiments, and hoped his friend, as great a worshipper as himself of Dryden's tales, would take in good part his remarks on the octosyllabic metre as applied to serious continued narrative. The following was Scott's reply :—

'*To G. Ellis, Esq.*

'My dear Ellis—I have been scandalously lazy in answering your kind epistle, received I don't know how long since, but then I had been long your creditor, and I fancy correspondents, like merchants, are often glad to plead their friends' neglect of their accompt-current as an apology for their own, especially when they know that the value of the payments being adjusted, must leave a sad balance against them. I have run up an attempt on the Curse of Kehama for the Quarterly ; a strange thing it is—the Curse, I mean—and the critique is not, as the blackguards say, worth a damn ; but what I could I did, which was to throw as much weight as possible upon the beautiful passages, of which there are many, and to slur over the absurdities, of which there are not a few. It is infinite pity of Southey, with genius almost to exuberance, so much learning and real good feeling of poetry, that, with the true obstinacy of a foolish papa, he *will* be most attached to the defects of his poetical offspring. This said Kehama affords cruel openings for the quizzers, and I suppose will get it roundly in the Edinburgh Review. I could have made a very different hand of it indeed, had the order of the day been *pour déchirer*.[1]

'I told you how much I was delighted with your critique on the Lady ; but, very likely moved by the same feeling for which I have just censured Southey, I am still inclined to defend the eight-syllable stanza, which I have somehow persuaded myself is more congenial to the English language—more favourable to narrative poetry at least—than that which has been commonly termed heroic verse. If you will take the trouble to read a page of Pope's Iliad, you will probably find a good many lines out of which two syllables may be struck without injury to the sense. The first lines of this translation have been repeatedly noticed as capable of being cut down from ships of the line into frigates, by striking out the said two-syllabled words, as—

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[1] See this article in his Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. xvii. pp. 301-337.

> Achilles' wrath to Greece, the *direful* spring
> Of woes unnumbered, *heavenly* goddess sing,
> That wrath which sent to Pluto's *gloomy* reign
> The souls of *mighty* chiefs in battle slain,
> Whose bones unburied on the *desert* shore,
> Devouring dogs and *hungry* vultures tore.

'Now, since it is true that by throwing out the epithets underscored, we preserve the sense without diminishing the force of the verses—and since it is also true that scarcely one of the epithets are more than merely expletive—I do really think that the structure of verse which requires least of this sort of bolstering, is most likely to be forcible and animated. The case is different in descriptive poetry, because there epithets, if they are happily selected, are rather to be sought after than avoided, and admit of being varied *ad infinitum*. But if in narrative you are frequently compelled to tag your substantives with adjectives, it must frequently happen that you are forced upon those that are merely commonplaces, such as "*heavenly* goddess," "*desert* shore," and so forth; and I need not tell you, that whenever any syllable is obviously inserted for the completion of a couplet, the reader is disposed to quarrel with it. Besides, the eight-syllable stanza is capable of certain varieties denied to the heroic. Double rhymes, for instance, are congenial to it, which often give a sort of Gothic richness to its cadences; you may also render it more or less rapid by retaining or dropping an occasional syllable. Lastly, and which I think its principal merit, it runs better into sentences than any length of line I know, as it corresponds, upon an average view of our punctuation, very commonly with the proper and usual space between comma and comma. Lastly the Second—and which ought perhaps to have been said first,—I think I have somehow a better knack at this "false gallop" of verse, as Touchstone calls it, than at your more legitimate hexameters; and so there is the short and long of my longs and shorts.—Ever yours,

'WALTER SCOTT.'

Mr. Ellis recurs to the octosyllabic measure of the Lady of the Lake in his next letter. 'I don't think,' says he, 'after all the eloquence with which you plead for your favourite metre, that you really like it from any other motive than that *sainte paresse*—that delightful indolence—which induces one to delight in doing those things which we can do with the least fatigue. If you will take the trouble of converting Dryden's Theodore and Honoria (a narrative, is it not?) into Hudibrastic measure, and after trying this on the first twenty lines you feel pleased with the transformation, I will give up the argument;—although, in point of fact, I believe that I regret the *variety* of your own old stanza, much more than the absence of that heroic measure, which you justly remark is not, without great difficulty, capable of being moulded into sentences of various lengths. When, therefore, you give us another poem, pray indulge me with rather a larger share of your ancient dithyrambics.'

Canning, too, came to the side of Ellis in this debate. After telling Scott, that 'on a repeated perusal' he had been 'more and more delighted' with the Lady of the Lake, he says—'But I *should* like to see something a little different when you write next. In short, I have sometimes thought (very presumptuously) that partly by persuasion, and partly by showing the effect of a change of dress—of a fuller and more sweeping style—upon some of your favourite passages, I could induce you to present yourself next time in a Drydenic habit. Has this ever occurred to you, and have you tried it, and not liked yourself so well?' We shall see by and by what attention Scott gave to these friendly suggestions.

Of the success of the new poem he speaks as follows in his Introduction of 1830:—'It was certainly so extraordinary as to induce me for the moment to conclude that I had at last fixed a nail in the proverbially inconstant wheel of Fortune. I had attained, perhaps, that degree of public reputation at which prudence, or certainly timidity, would have made a halt, and discontinued efforts by which I was far more likely to diminish my fame than to increase it. But—as the celebrated John Wilkes is said to have explained to King George the Third, that he himself, amid his full tide of popularity, was never a Wilkite—so I can with honest truth exculpate myself from having been at any time a partisan of my own poetry, even when it was in the highest fashion with the million. It must not be supposed that I was either so ungrateful, or so superabundantly candid, as to despise or scorn the value of those whose voice had elevated me so much higher than my own opinion told me I deserved. I felt, on the contrary, the more grateful to the public, as receiving that from partiality which I could not have claimed from merit: and I endeavoured to deserve the partiality by continuing such exertions as I was capable of for their amusement.'

James Ballantyne has preserved in his *Memorandum* an anecdote strikingly confirmative of the most remarkable statement in this page of Scott's confessions. 'I remember,' he says, 'going into his library shortly after the publication of the Lady of the Lake, and finding Miss Scott (who was then a very young girl) there by herself. I asked her—"Well, Miss Sophia, how do you like the Lady of the Lake?" Her answer was given with perfect simplicity—"Oh, I have not read it; papa says there's nothing so bad for young people as reading bad poetry."'

In fact, his children in those days had no idea of the source of his distinction—or rather, indeed, that his position was in any respect different from that of other Advocates, Sheriffs, and Clerks of Session. The eldest boy came home one afternoon about this time from the High School, with tears and blood hardened together upon his cheeks. 'Well, Wat,' said his father, 'what have you been fighting about to-day?' With that the boy blushed and hung his head, and at last stammered out—that 'he had been called *a lassie*.' 'Indeed!' said Mrs. Scott, 'this was a terrible mischief to be sure.' 'You may say what you please, mamma,' Wat answered roughly, 'but I dinna think there's a *waufer* (shabbier) thing in the world than to be a lassie, to sit boring at a clout.' Upon further enquiry it turned out that one or two of his companions had dubbed him *The Lady of the Lake*, and the phrase was to him incomprehensible, save as conveying some imputation on his prowess, which he accordingly vindicated in the usual style of the Yards. Of the poem he had never before heard. Shortly after, this story having got wind, one of Scott's colleagues of the Clerks' Table said to the boy—'Gilnockie, my man, you cannot surely help seeing that great people make more work about your papa than they do about me or any other of your *uncles*—what is it, do you suppose, that occasions this?' The little fellow pondered for a minute or two, and then answered very gravely—'It's commonly *him* that sees the hare sitting.' And yet this was the man that had his children all along so very much with him. In truth, however, young Walter had guessed pretty shrewdly in the matter, for his father had all the tact of the Sutherland Highlander, whose detection of an Irish rebel up to the neck in a bog, he has commemorated in a note upon Rokeby. Like him, he was quick to catch the *sparkle* of the future victim's eye; and often said jestingly of himself, that whatever might be thought of him as a *maker* (poet), he was an excellent *trouveur*.

Ballantyne adds:—'One day, about this same time, when his fame was supposed to have reached its acme, I said to him—"Will you excuse me, Mr. Scott, but I should like to ask you what you think of your own genius as a poet, in comparison with that of Burns?"—He replied —"There is no comparison whatever—we ought not to be named in the same day." "Indeed!" I answered, "would you compare Campbell to Burns?" "No, James, not at all—If you wish to speak of a real poet, Joanna Baillie is now the highest genius of our country." —But, in fact' (continues Ballantyne)—'he had often said to me that neither his own nor any modern popular style of composition was that from which he derived most pleasure. I asked him what it was. He answered—Johnson's; and that he had more pleasure in reading "London," and "The Vanity of Human Wishes," than any other poetical composition he could mention; and I think I never saw his countenance more indicative of high admiration than while reciting aloud from those productions.'

In his Sketch of Johnson's Life, Scott says—'The deep and pathetic morality of "The Vanity of Human Wishes" has often extracted tears from those whose eyes wander dry over pages professedly sentimental.'[1] And Lord Byron, in his Ravenna Diary,[2] has the following entry on the same subject:—'Read Johnson's Vanity of Human Wishes,—all the examples and mode of giving them sublime, as well as the latter part, with the exception of an occasional couplet. 'Tis a grand poem—and so *true!*—true as the 10th of Juvenal himself. The lapse of ages changes all things—time—language—the earth—the bounds of the sea—the stars of the sky, and everything about, around, and underneath man, except man himself, who has always been, and always will be, an unlucky rascal. The infinite variety of lives conduct but to death, and the infinity of wishes lead but to disappointment.'—

The last line of MS. that Scott sent to the press was a quotation from the 'Vanity of Human Wishes.' Yet it is the cant of our day—above all, of its poetasters, that Johnson was no poet. To be sure, they say the same of Pope—and hint it occasionally even of Dryden.

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[1] Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. iii. p. 264.

[2] Life and Works, vol. v. p. 66.

CHAPTER XXI

First Visit to the Hebrides—Staffa—Skye—Mull—Iona, etc.—The Lord of the Isles projected—Letters to Joanna Baillie—Southey—and Morritt.

1810

WALTER SCOTT was at this epoch in the highest spirits, and having strong reasons of various kinds for his resolution to avail himself of the gale of favour, only hesitated in which quarter to explore the materials of some new romance. His first and most earnest desire was to spend a few months with the British army in the Peninsula, but this he soon resigned, from an amiable motive, which a letter presently to be quoted will explain. He then thought of revisiting Rokeby—for he had from the first day that he spent on that magnificent domain, contemplated it as the scenery of a future poem. But the burst of enthusiasm which followed the appearance of the Lady of the Lake finally swayed him to undertake a journey, deeper than he had as yet gone, into the Highlands, and a warm invitation from the Laird of Staffa,[1] a brother of his friend and colleague Mr. Macdonald Buchanan, easily induced him to add a voyage to the Hebrides. He was accompanied by part of his family (not forgetting his dog

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[1] The reader will find a warm tribute to Staffa's character as a Highland landlord, in Scott's article on Sir John Carr's Caledonian Sketches,—(Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. xix.); and some spirited verses, written at his mansion of Ulva, in Scott's Poetical Works, Edition 1834, vol. x. p. 356.

Wallace), and by several friends besides; among others his relation Mrs. Apreece (now Lady Davy), who had been, as he says in one of his letters, 'a lioness of the first magnitude in Edinburgh,' during the preceding winter. He travelled slowly with his own horses, through Argyleshire, as far as Oban; but indeed, even where post-horses might have been had, this was the mode he always preferred in these family excursions, for he delighted in the liberty it afforded him of alighting and lingering as often and as long as he chose: and, in truth, he often performed the far greater part of the day's journey on foot—examining the map in the morning so as to make himself master of the bearings—and following his own fancy over some old disused riding track, or along the margin of a stream, while the carriage, with its female occupants, adhered to the proper road. At Oban, where they took to the sea, Mrs. Apreece met him by appointment.

He seems to have kept no journal during this expedition; but I shall string together some letters which, with the notes that he contributed many years afterwards to Mr. Croker's Edition of Boswell, may furnish a tolerable sketch of the insular part of his progress, and of the feelings with which he first inspected the localities of his last great poem—The Lord of the Isles. The first of these letters is dated from the Hebridean residence of the young Laird of Staffa.[1]

'*To Miss Joanna Baillie.*

'ULVA HOUSE, *July* 19, 1810.

'I cannot, my dear Miss Baillie, resist the temptation of writing to you from scenes which you have rendered classical as well as immortal. We—which in the present case means my wife, my eldest girl, and myself—are thus far in fortunate accomplishment of a pilgrimage to the

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[1] Sir Reginald Macdonald Steuart Seton, of Staffa, Allanton, and Touch, Baronet, died 15th April 1838, in his 61st year.

Hebrides. The day before yesterday we passed the Lady's Rock, in the Sound of Mull, so near that I could almost have touched it. This is, you know, the Rock of your "Family Legend." The boat, by my desire, went as near as prudence permitted ; and I wished to have picked a relic from it, were it but a cockle-shell or a mussel, to have sent to you ; but a spring-tide was running with such force and velocity as to make the thing impossible. About two miles farther, we passed under the Castle of Duart, the seat of Maclean, consisting of one huge (indeed immense) square tower, in ruins, and additional turrets and castellated buildings (the work, doubtless, of Benlora's guardianship), on which the roof still moulders. It overhangs the strait channel from a lofty rock, without a single tree in the vicinity, and is surrounded by high and barren mountains, forming altogether as wild and dreary a scene as I ever beheld. Duart is confronted by the opposite castles of Dunstaffnage, Dunolly, Ardtornish, and others, all once the abodes of grim feudal chiefs, who warred incessantly with each other. I think I counted seven of these fortresses in sight at once, and heard seven times seven legends of war and wonder connected with them. We landed late, wet and cold, on the Island of Mull, near another old castle called Aros, separated, too, from our clothes, which were in a large wherry, which could not keep pace with our row-boat. Mr. Macdonald of Staffa, my kind friend and guide, had sent his piper (a constant attendant, mark that !) to rouse a Highland gentleman's family in the neighbourhood, where we were received with a profusion of kindness and hospitality. Why should I appal you with a description of our difficulties and distresses—how Charlotte lost her shoes, and little Sophia her whole collection of pebbles—how I was divorced from my razors, and the whole party looked like a Jewish sanhedrim ! By this time we were accumulated as follows :—Sir George Paul, the great philanthropist, Mrs. Apreece, a distant relation of mine, Hannah Mackenzie, a daughter of our friend Henry, and Mackinnon of Mackinnon, a young gentleman born and bred in England, but nevertheless a Highland chief.[1] It seems his father had acquired wealth, and this young man, who now visits the Highlands for the first time, is anxious to buy back some of the family property which was sold long since. Some twenty Mackinnons, who happened to live within hearing of our arrival (that is, I suppose, within ten miles of Aros), came posting to see their young chief, who behaved with great kindness, and propriety, and liberality. Next day we rode across the isle on Highland ponies, attended by a numerous retinue of gillies, and arrived at the head of the salt-water loch called Loch-an-Gaoil, where Staffa's boats awaited us with colours flying and pipes playing. We proceeded in state to this lonely isle, where our honoured lord has a very comfortable residence, and were received by a discharge of swivels and musketry from his people.

'Yesterday we visited Staffa and Iona. The former is one of the most extraordinary places I ever beheld. It exceeded, in my mind, every description I had heard of it; or rather, the appearance of the cavern, composed entirely of basaltic pillars as high as the roof of a cathedral,[2] and running deep into the rock, eternally swept by a deep and swelling sea, and paved as it were with ruddy marble, baffles all description. You can walk along the broken pillars, with some difficulty, and in some places with a little danger, as far as the farthest extremity. Boats also can come in below when the sea is placid,—which is seldom the case. I had become a sort of favourite with the Hebridean boatmen, I suppose from my anxiety about their old customs, and they were much pleased to see me get over the obstacles which stopped some of the party. So they took the whim of solemnly christening a great stone seat at the mouth of the cavern, Clachan-an-Bairdh, or the Poet's Stone. It was consecrated with a pibroch, which the echoes rendered tremendous, and a glass of whisky, not poured forth in the ancient mode of libation, but turned over the throats of the assistants. The head boatman, whose father had been himself a bard, made me a speech on the occasion; but as it was in Gaelic, I could only receive it as a silly beauty does a fine-spun compliment—bow, and say nothing.

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[1] William Alexander Mackinnon, Esq., now member of Parliament for Lymington, Hants.

[2] ——— that wondrous dome,
Where, as to shame the temples deck'd
By skill of earthly architect,
Nature herself, it seem'd, would raise
A minster to her Maker's praise!
Not for a meaner use ascend
Her columns, or her arches bend;
Nor of a theme less solemn tells
That mighty surge that ebbs and swells,
And still, between each awful pause
From the high vault an answer draws,
In varied tone prolonged and high,
That mocks the organ's melody.
Nor doth its entrance front in vain
To old Iona's holy fane,
That Nature's voice might seem to say,
'Well hast thou done, frail Child of clay!
Thy humble powers that stately shrine
Task'd high and hard—but witness mine!'
Lord of the Isles, Canto iv. St. 10.

'When this fun was over (in which, strange as it may seem, the men were quite serious), we went to Iona, where there are some ancient and curious monuments. From this remote island the light of Christianity shone forth on Scotland and Ireland. The ruins are of a rude architecture, but curious to the antiquary. Our return was less comfortable; we had to row twenty miles against an Atlantic tide and some wind, besides the pleasure of seeing occasional squalls gathering to windward. The ladies were sick, especially poor Hannah Mackenzie, and none of the gentlemen escaped except Staffa and myself. The men, however, cheered by the pipes, and by their own interesting boat-songs, which were uncommonly wild and beautiful, one man leading and the others answering in chorus, kept pulling away without apparently the least sense of fatigue, and we reached Ulva at ten at night, tolerably wet, and well disposed for bed.

'Our friend Staffa is himself an excellent specimen of Highland chieftainship; he is a cadet of Clanronald, and lord of a cluster of isles on the western side of Mull, and a large estate (in extent at least) on that island. By dint of minute attention to this property, and particularly to the management of his kelp, he has at once trebled his income and doubled his population, while emigration is going on all around him. But he is very attentive to his people, who are distractedly fond of him, and has them under such regulations as conduce both to his own benefit and their profit; and keeps a certain sort of rude state and hospitality, in which they can take much pride. I am quite satisfied that nothing under the personal attention of the landlord himself will satisfy a Highland tenantry, and that the substitution of factors, which is now becoming general, is one great cause of emigration. This mode of life has, however, its evils; and I can see them in this excellent man. The habit of solitary power is dangerous even to the best regulated minds, and this ardent and enthusiastic young man has not escaped the prejudices incident to his situation. But I think I have bestowed enough of my tediousness upon you. To ballast my letter, I put in one of the hallowed green pebbles from the shore of St. Columba—put it into your work-basket until we meet, when you will give me some account of its virtues. Don't suppose the lapidaries can give you any information about it, for in their profane eyes it is good for nothing. But the piper is sounding to breakfast, so no more (excepting love to Miss Agnes, Dr. and Mrs. Baillie), from your truly affectionate WALTER SCOTT.

'*P.S.*—I am told by the learned, the pebble will wear its way out of the letter, so I will keep it till I get to Edinburgh. I must not omit to mention, that all through these islands I have found every person familiarly acquainted with the "Family Legend," and great admirers.'

It would be idle to extract many of Scott's notes on Boswell's Hebridean Journal; but the following specimens appear too characteristic to be omitted. Of the island Inchkenneth, where Johnson was received by the head of the clan Maclean, he says—

Inchkenneth is a most beautiful little islet of the most verdant green, while all the neighbouring shore of Greban, as well as the large islands of Colonsay and Ulva, are as black as heath and moss can make them. But Ulva has a good anchorage, and Inchkenneth is surrounded by shoals. It is now uninhabited. The ruins of the huts, in which Dr. Johnson was received by Sir Allan M'Lean, were still to be seen, and some tatters of the paperhangings were to be seen on the walls. Sir George Onesiphorus Paul was at Inchkenneth with the same party of which I was a member. He seemed to me to suspect many of the Highland tales which he heard, but he showed most incredulity on the subject of Johnson's having been entertained in the wretched huts of which we saw the ruins. He took me aside, and conjured me to tell him the truth of the matter. 'This Sir Allan,' said he, 'was he a *regular baronet*, or was his title such a traditional one as you find in Ireland?' I assured my excellent acquaintance that, 'for my own part, I would have paid more respect to a Knight of Kerry, or Knight of Glynn—yet Sir Allan M'Lean was a *regular baronet* by patent'; and, having given him this information, I took the liberty of asking him, in return, whether he would not in conscience prefer the worst cell in the jail at Gloucester (which he had been very active in overlooking while the building was going on) to those exposed hovels where Johnson had been entertained by rank and beauty. He looked round the little islet, and allowed Sir Allan had some advantage in exercising ground; but in other respects he thought the compulsory tenants of Gloucester had greatly the advantage. Such was his opinion of a place, concerning which Johnson has recorded that 'it wanted little which palaces could afford.'

Sir Allan M'Lean, like many Highland chiefs, was embarrassed in his private affairs, and exposed to unpleasant solicitations from attorneys, called, in Scotland, *Writers* (which, indeed, was the chief motive of his retiring to Inchkenneth). Upon one occasion he made a visit to a friend, then residing at Carron Lodge, on the banks of the Carron, where the banks of that river are studded with pretty villas. Sir Allan, admiring the landscape, asked his friend whom that handsome seat belonged to. 'M——, the Writer to the Signet,' was the reply. 'Umph!' said Sir Allan, but not with an accent of assent, 'I mean that other house.' 'Oh! that belongs to a very honest fellow, Jamie ——, also a Writer to the Signet.'—'Umph!' said the Highland chief of M'Lean, with more emphasis than before.—'And yon smaller house?'—'That belongs to a Stirling man; I forget his name, but I am sure he is a writer too; for'—— Sir Allan, who had recoiled a quarter of a circle backward at every response, now wheeled the circle entire, and turned his back on the landscape, saying, 'My good friend, I must own you have a pretty situation here, but d—n your neighbourhood.'

The following notices of Boswell himself, and his father, Lord Auchinleck, may be taken as literal transcripts from Scott's Table-Talk:—

Boswell himself was callous to the *contacts* of Dr. Johnson, and when telling them, always reminds one of a jockey receiving a kick from the horse which he is showing off to a customer and is grinning with pain while he is trying to cry out, 'Pretty rogue—no vice—all fun.' To him Johnson's rudeness was only '*pretty Fanny's way*.' Dr. Robertson had a sense of good breeding, which inclined him rather to forgo the benefit of Johnson's conversation than awaken his rudeness. . . .

Old Lord Auchinleck was an able lawyer, a good scholar, after the manner of Scotland, and highly valued his own advantages as a man of good estate and ancient family; and, moreover, he was a strict Presbyterian and Whig of the old Scottish cast. This did not prevent his being a terribly proud aristocrat; and great was the contempt he entertained and expressed for his son James, for the nature of his friendship, and the character of the personages of whom he was *engoué* one after another. 'There's nae hope for Jamie, mon,' he said to a friend. 'Jamie is gane clean gyte. What do you think, mon? He's done wi' Paoli—he's off wi' the land-louping scoundrel of a Corsican; and whose tail do you think he has pinned himself to now, mon?' Here the old Judge summoned up a sneer of most sovereign contempt. 'A *dominie*, mon—an auld dominie! he keeped a schule, and caud it an *acaadamy*.' Probably if this had been reported to Johnson, he would have felt it most galling, for he never much liked to think of that period of his life; it would have aggravated his dislike of Lord Auchinleck's Whiggery and Presbyterianism. These the old Lord carried to such an unusual height, that once, when a country man came in to state some justice business, and being required to make his oath, declined to do so before his Lordship, because he was not a *covenanted* magistrate—'Is that a' your objection, mon?' said the Judge; 'come your ways in here, and we'll baith of us tak the solemn league and covenant together.' The oath was accordingly agreed and sworn to by both, and I daresay it was the last time it ever received such homage. It may be surmised how far Lord Auchinleck, such as he is here described, was likely to suit a high Tory and Episcopalian like Johnson. As they approached Auchinleck, Boswell conjured Johnson by all the ties of regard, and in requital of the services he had rendered him upon his tour, that he would spare two subjects in tenderness to his father's prejudices; the first related to Sir John Pringle, President of the Royal Society, about whom there was then some dispute current; the second concerned the general question of Whig and Tory. Sir John Pringle, as Boswell says, escaped, but the controversy between Tory and Covenanter raged with great fury, and ended in Johnson's pressing upon the old Judge the question, what good Cromwell, of whom he had said something derogatory, had ever done to his country?—when, after being much tortured, Lord Auchinleck at last spoke out, 'God! doctor, he gart kings ken that they had a *lith* in their neck'—he taught kings they had a *joint* in their necks. Jamie then set to mediating between his father and the philosopher, and availing himself of the Judge's sense of hospitality, which was punctilious, reduced the debate to more order.

The following letter, dated Ashestiel, August 9, appears to have been written immediately on Scott's return from this expedition :—

'*To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., Rokeby Park.*

'MY DEAR MORRITT—Your letter reached me in the very centre of the Isle of Mull, from which circumstance you will perceive how vain it was for me even to attempt availing myself of your kind invitation to Rokeby, which would otherwise have given us so much pleasure. We deeply regretted the absence of our kind and accomplished friends, the Clephanes, yet, *entre nous*, as we were upon a visit to a family of the Capulets, I do not know but we may pay our respects to them more pleasantly at another time. There subsist some aching scars of the old wounds which were in former times inflicted upon each other by the rival tribes of M'Lean and Macdonald, and my very good friends the Laird of Staffa and Mrs. M'Lean Clephane are both too true Highlanders to be without the characteristic prejudices of their clans, which, in their case, divide two highly-accomplished and most estimable families, living almost within sight of each other, and on an island where polished conversation cannot be supposed to abound.

'I was delighted, on the whole, with my excursion. The weather was most excellent during the whole time of our wanderings; and I need not tell you of Highland hospitality. The cavern at Staffa, and indeed the island itself, *dont on parle en histoire*, is one of the few *lions* which completely maintain an extended reputation. I do not know whether its extreme resemblance to a work of art, from the perfect regularity of the columns, or the grandeur of its dimensions, far exceeding the works of human industry, joined to a certain ruggedness and magnificent irregularity, by which nature vindicates her handiwork, are most forcibly impressed upon my memory. We also saw the far-famed Island of Columba, where there are many monuments of singular curiosity, forming a strange contrast to the squalid and dejected poverty of the present inhabitants of the isle. We accomplished both these objects in one day, but our return, though we had no alarms to boast of, was fatiguing to the ladies, and the sea not affording us quite such a smooth passage as we had upon the Thames (that morning we heard the voice of Lysons setting forth the contents of the records in the White Tower), did, as one may say, excite a combustion in the stomachs of some of our party. Mine being a staunch anti-revolutionist, was no otherwise troublesome than by demanding frequent supplies of cold beef and biscuit. Mrs. Apreece was of our party. Also

—Sir George Paul, for prison-house renowned,
A wandering knight, on high adventures bound.

—We left this celebrated philanthropist in a plight not unlike some of the misadventures of "Him of the sorrowful figure." The worthy baronet was mounted on a quadruped, which the owners called a pony, with his woeful valet on another, and travelling slowly along the coast of Mull, in order to detect the point which approached nearest to the continent, protesting he would not again put foot in a boat till he had discovered the shortest possible traject. Our separation reminded me of the disastrous incident in Byron's "Shipwreck," when they were forced to abandon two of their crew on an unknown coast, and beheld them at a distance commencing their solitary peregrination along the cliffs. WALTER SCOTT.'

The Iona pebble, mentioned in Scott's letter from Ulva, being set in a brooch of the form of a harp, was sent to Joanna Baillie some months later; but it may be as well to insert here the letter which accompanied it. The young friend, to whose return from a trip to the seat of war in the Peninsula it alludes, was John Miller, Esq., then practising at the Scotch bar, but now an eminent King's counsel of Lincoln's Inn.

'*To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.*

'EDINBURGH, *Nov.* 23, 1810.

'I should not have been so long your debtor, my dear Miss Baillie, for your kind and valued letter, had not the false knave, at whose magic touch the Iona pebbles were to assume a shape in some degree appropriate to the person to whom they are destined, delayed finishing his task. I hope you will set some value upon this little trumpery brooch, because it is a harp, and a Scotch harp, and set with Iona stones. This last circumstance is more valuable, if ancient tales be true, than can be ascertained from the reports of dull modern lapidaries. These green stones, blessed of St. Columba, have a virtue, saith old Martin, to gratify each of them a single wish of the wearer. I believe, that which is most frequently formed by those who gather them upon the shores of the Saint, is for a fair wind to transport them from his domains. Now, after this, you must suppose everything respecting this said harp sacred and hallowed. The very inscription is, you will please to observe, in the ancient Celtic language and character, and has a very talismanic look. I hope that upon you it will have the effect of a conjuration, for the words *Buail a'n Teud* signify *Strike the String;* and thus having, like the pedlars who deal in like matters of value, exhausted all my eloquence in setting forth the excellent outward qualities and mysterious virtues of my little keepsake, I have only to add, in homely phrase, God give you joy to wear it. I am delighted with the account of your brother's silvan empire in Glo'stershire. The planting and cultivation of trees always seemed to me the most interesting occupation of the country. I cannot enter into the spirit of common vulgar farming, though I am doomed to carry on, in a small extent, that losing trade. It never occurred to me to be a bit more happy because my turnips were better than my neighbours; and as for *grieving* my shearers, as we very emphatically term it in Scotland, I am always too happy to get out of the way, that I may hear them laughing at a distance when on the harvest rigg.

> So every servant takes his course,
> And bad at first, they all grow worse—

I mean for the purposes of agriculture,—for my hind shall kill a salmon, and my plough-boy find a hare sitting, with any man in the forest. But planting and pruning trees I could work at from morning till night; and if ever my poetical revenues enable me to have a few acres of my own, that is one of the principal pleasures I look forward to. There is, too, a sort of self-congratulation, a little tickling self-flattery in the idea that, while you are pleasing and amusing yourself, you are seriously contributing to the future welfare of the country, and that your very acorn may send its future ribs of oak to future victories like Trafalgar.

'You have now by my calculation abandoned your extensive domains and returned to your Hampstead villa, which, at this season of the year, though the lesser, will prove, from your neighbourhood to good society, the more comfortable habitation of the two. Dr. Baillie's cares are transferred (I fear for some time) to a charge still more important than the poor Princess.[1] I trust in God that his skill and that of his brethren may be of advantage to the poor King; for a Regency, from its unsettled and uncertain tenure, must in every country, but especially where parties run so high, be a lamentable business. I wonder that the consequences which have taken place had not occurred sooner, during the long and trying suspense in which his mind must have been held by the protracted lingering state of a beloved child.

'Your country neighbours interest me excessively. I was delighted with the man, who remembered me, though he had forgotten Sancho Panza; but I am afraid my pre-eminence in his memory will not remain much longer than the worthy squire's government at Barataria.

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[1] The Princess Amelia—whose death was immediately followed by the hopeless malady of King George III.

Meanwhile, the Lady of the Lake is likely to come to preferment in an unexpected manner, for two persons of no less eminence than Messrs. Martin and Reynolds, play-carpenters in ordinary to Covent Garden, are employed in scrubbing, careening, and cutting her down into one of those new-fashioned sloops called a melodrama, to be launched at the theatre; and my friend, Mr. H. Siddons, emulous of such a noble design, is at work on the same job here. It puts me in mind of the observation with which our parish smith accompanied his answer to an enquiry whom he had heard preach on Sunday—"Mr. such-a-one—O! sir, he made *neat work*," thinking, doubtless, of turning off a horse-shoe handsomely. I think my worthy artizans will make neat work too before they have done with my unlucky materials—but, as Durandarte says in the cavern of Montesinos—"Patience, cousin, and shuffle the cards." Jeffrey *was* the author of the critique in the Edinburgh; he sent it to me in the sheet, with an apology for some things in that of Marmion which he said contained needless asperities; and, indeed, whatever I may think of the justice of some part of his criticism, I think his general tone is much softened in my behalf.

'You say nothing about the drama on Fear, for which you have chosen so admirable a subject, and which, I think, will be in your own most powerful manner. I hope you will have an eye to its being actually represented. Perhaps of all passions it is the most universally interesting; for although most part of an audience may have been in love once in their lives, and many engaged in the pursuits of ambition, and some perhaps have fostered deadly hate; yet there will always be many in each case who cannot judge of the operations of these motives from personal experience: Whereas, I will bet my life there is not a soul of them but has felt the impulse of fear, were it but, as the old tale goes, at snuffing a candle with his fingers. I believe I should have been able to communicate some personal anecdotes on the subject, had I been enabled to accomplish a plan I have had much at heart this summer, namely, to take a peep at Lord Wellington and his merry men in Portugal; but I found the idea gave Mrs. Scott more distress than I am entitled to do for the mere gratification of my own curiosity. Not that there would have been any great danger,—for I could easily, as a non-combatant, have kept out of the way of the "grinning honour" of my namesake, Sir Walter Blount,[1] and I think I should have been overpaid for a little hardship and risk by the novelty of the scene. I could have got very good recommendations to Lord Wellington; and, I daresay, I should have picked up some curious materials for battle scenery. A friend of mine made the very expedition, and arriving at Oporto when our army was in retreat from the frontier, he was told of the difficulty and danger he might encounter in crossing the country to the southward, so as to join them on the march; nevertheless, he travelled on through a country totally deserted, unless when he met bands of fugitive peasantry flying they scarce knew whither, or the yet wilder groups of the Ordimanza, or *levy en masse*, who, fired with revenge or desire of plunder, had armed themselves to harass the French detached parties. At length in a low glen he heard, with feelings that may be easily conceived, the distant sound of a Highland bagpipe playing "The Garb of Old Gaul," and fell into the quarters of a Scotch regiment, where he was most courteously received by his countrymen, who assured "his honour he was just come in time to see the pattle." Accordingly, being a young man of spirit, and a volunteer sharpshooter, he got a rifle, joined the light corps, and next day witnessed the Battle of Busaco, of which he describes the carnage as being terrible. The narrative was very simply told, and conveyed, better than any I have seen, the impressions which such scenes are likely to make when they have the effect (I had almost said the charm) of novelty. I don't know why it is I never found a soldier could give me an idea of a battle. I believe their mind is too much upon the *tactique* to regard the picturesque, just as the lawyers care very little for an eloquent speech at the bar, if it does not show good doctrine. The technical phrases of the military art, too, are unfavourable to convey a description of the concomitant terror and desolation that attends an engagement; but enough of "this bald disjointed chat,"[1] from ever yours,

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[1] See 1st K. Henry IV. Act V. Scene 3.

'W. S.'

There appeared in the London Courier of September 15, 1810, an article signed S. T. C., charging Scott with being a plagiarist, more especially from the works of the poet for whose initials this signature had no doubt been meant to pass. On reading this silly libel, Mr. Southey felt satisfied that Samuel Taylor Coleridge could have no concern in its manufacture; but as Scott was not so well acquainted with Coleridge as himself, he lost no time in procuring his friend's indignant disavowal, and forwarding it to Ashestiel. Scott acknowledges this delicate attention as follows:—

'*To Robert Southey, Esq.*

'ASHESTIEL, *Thursday.*

'MY DEAR SOUTHEY—Your letter, this morning received, released me from the very painful feeling that a man of Mr. Coleridge's high talents, which I had always been among the first to appreciate as they deserve, had thought me worthy of the sort of public attack which appeared in the Courier of the 15th. The initials are so remarkable, and the trick so very impudent, that I was likely to be fairly duped by it, for which I have to request Mr. Coleridge's forgiveness. I believe attacks of any sort sit as light upon me as they can on any one. If I have had my share of them, it is one point, at least, in which I resemble greater poets—but I should not like to have them come from the hand of comtemporary genius. A man, though he does not "wear his heart upon his sleeve for daws to peck at,"[1] would not willingly be stooped upon by a falcon. I am truly obliged to your friendship for so speedily relieving me from so painful a feeling. The hoax was probably designed to set two followers of literature by the ears, and I daresay will be followed up by something equally impudent. As for the imitations, I have not the least hesitation in saying to you that I was unconscious at the time of appropriating the goods of others, although I have not the least doubt that several of the passages must have been running in my head. Had I meant to steal, I would have been more cautious to disfigure the stolen goods. In one or two instances the resemblance seems general and casual, and in one, I think, it was impossible I could practise plagiarism, as Ethwald, one of the poems quoted, was published *after* the Lay of the Last Minstrel. A witty rogue, the other day, who sent me a letter subscribed Detector, proved me guilty of stealing a passage from one of Vida's Latin poems, which I had never seen or heard of; yet there was so strong a general resemblance, as fairly to authorize Detector's suspicion.

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[1] Hotspur—1st K. Henry IV. Act I. Scene 3.

'I renounced my Greta excursion in consequence of having made instead a tour to the Highlands, particularly to the Isles. I wished for Wordsworth and you a hundred times. The scenery is quite different from that on the mainland—dark, savage, and horrid, but occasionally magnificent in the highest degree. Staffa, in particular, merits well its far-famed reputation: it is a cathedral arch, scooped by the hand of nature, equal in dimensions and in regularity to the most magnificent aisle of a Gothic cathedral. The sea rolls up to the extremity in most tremendous majesty, and with a voice like ten thousand giants shouting at once. I visited Icolmkill also, where there are some curious monuments, mouldering among the poorest and most naked wretches that I ever beheld.—Affectionately yours, W. SCOTT.'

The 'lines of VIDA,' which 'Detector' had enclosed to Scott as the obvious original of the address to 'Woman' in Marmion, closing with

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[1] Othello, Act I. Scene 1.

> When pain and anguish wring the brow,
> A ministering angel thou!

end as follows;—and it must be owned that, if Vida had really written them, a more extraordinary example of casual coincidence could never have been pointed out—

> Cum dolor atque supercilio gravis imminet angor,
> Fungeris angelico sola ministerio!

Detector's reference is 'VIDA *ad Eranen*, El. II. v. 21';—but it is almost needless to add there are no such lines—and no piece bearing such a title in Vida's works. Detector was no doubt some young college wag, for his letter has a Cambridge postmark.

CHAPTER XXII

Life of Miss Seward—Waverley resumed—Ballantyne's Critique on the First Chapters of the Novel—Waverley again laid aside—Unfortunate Speculations of John Ballantyne and Co.; History of the Culdees—Tixall Poetry; Beaumont and Fletcher—Edinburgh Annual Register, etc.—Scott's Essay on Judicial Reform—His scheme of going to India—Letters on the War in the Peninsula—Death of Lord President Blair—and of Lord Melville—Publication of the Vision of Don Roderick—The Inferno of Altesidora, etc.

1810–1811

In the course of this autumn appeared the Poetical Works of Miss Seward, in three volumes, with a Prefatory Memoir of her Life by Scott. This edition had, as we have seen, been enjoined by her last will—but his part in it was an ungrateful one, and the book was among the most unfortunate that James Ballantyne printed, and his brother published, in deference to the personal feelings of their partner. He had been, as was natural, pleased and flattered by the attentions of the Lichfield poetess in the days of his early aspirations after literary distinction; but her verses, which he had with his usual readiness praised to herself beyond their worth, appeared when collected a formidable monument of mediocrity. Her Correspondence, published at the same time by Constable, was considered by him with still greater aversion. He requested the bookseller to allow him to look over the

MS., and draw his pen through passages in which her allusions to letters of his own might compromise him as a critic on his poetical contemporaries. To this request Constable handsomely acceded, although it was evident that he thus deprived the collection of its best chance of popularity. I see, on comparing her letters as they originally reached Scott, with the printed copies, that he had also struck out many of her most extravagant rhapsodies about himself and his works. No collection of this kind, after all, can be wholly without value; I have already drawn from it some sufficiently interesting fragments, as the biographers of other eminent authors of this time will probably do hereafter under the like circumstances: and, however affected and absurd, Miss Seward's prose is certainly far better than her verse.

And now I come to a very curious letter of James Ballantyne's, the date of which seems to fix pretty accurately the time when Scott *first* resumed the long-forgotten MS. of his Waverley. As in the Introduction of 1829 he mentions having received discouragement as to the opening part of the novel from two friends, and as Ballantyne on this occasion writes as if he had never before seen any portion of it, I conclude that the fragment of 1805 had in that year been submitted to Erskine alone.

'*To Walter Scott, Esq.*, *Ashestiel.*

'EDINBURGH, *Sept.* 15, 1810.

'DEAR SIR—What you have sent of Waverley has amused me much; and certainly if I had read it as part of a new novel, the remainder of which was open to my perusal, I should have proceeded with avidity. So much for its general effect; but you have sent me too little to enable me to form a decided opinion. Were I to say that I was equally struck with Waverley as I was with the much smaller portion of the Lady, which you first presented to us as a specimen, the truth would not be in me; but the cases are different. It is impossible that a small part of a fine novel can equally impress one with the decided conviction of splendour and success as a small part of a fine poem. I will state one or two things that strike me. Considering that "sixty years since" only leads us back to the year 1750, a period when our fathers were alive and merry, it seems to me that the air of antiquity diffused over the character is rather too great to harmonize with the time. The period is modern; Johnson was writing—and Garrick was acting—and in fact scarcely anything appears to have altered, more important than the cut of a coat.

'The account of the studies of Waverley seems unnecessarily minute. There are few novel readers to whom it would be interesting. I can see at once the connexion between the studies of Don Quixote, or of the Female Quixote, and the events of their lives; but I have not yet been able to trace betwixt Waverley's character and his studies such clear and decided connexion. The account, in short, seemed to me too particular; quite unlike your usual mode in your poetry, and less happy. It may be, however, that the further progress of the character will defeat this criticism. The character itself I think excellent and interesting, and I was equally astonished and delighted to find in the last-written chapter that you can paint to the eye in prose as well as in verse.

'Perhaps your own reflections are rather too often mixed with the narrative—but I state this with much diffidence. I do not mean to object to a train of reflections arising from some striking event, but I don't like their so frequent recurrence. The language is spirited, but perhaps rather careless. The humour is admirable. Should you go on? My opinion is, clearly—certainly. I have no doubt of success, though it is impossible to guess how much. . . .—Ever respectfully, J. B.'

The part of the letter which I have omitted, refers to the state of Ballantyne's business at the time when it was written. He had, that same week, completed the eleventh edition of the Lay; and the fifth of the Lady of the Lake had not passed through his press, before new orders from London called for the beginning of a sixth. I presume the printer's exultation on this triumphant success had a great share in leading him to consider with doubt and suspicion the propriety of his friends interrupting just then his career as the great caterer for readers of poetry. However this and other matters may have stood, the novel appears to have been forthwith laid aside again.

Some sentences refer to less fortunate circumstances in their joint affairs. The publishing firm was not as yet a twelvemonth old, and already James began to apprehend that some of their mightiest undertakings would wholly disappoint Scott's prognostications. He speaks with particular alarm of the edition of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays, of which Weber had now dismissed several volumes from his incompetent and presumptuous hand. How Scott should ever have countenanced the project of an edition of an English book of this class, by a mere drudging *German*, appears to me quite inexplicable. He placed at Weber's disposal his own annotated copy, which had been offered some years before for the use of Gifford; but Weber's text is thoroughly disgraceful, and so are all the notes, except those which he owed to his patron's own pen. James Ballantyne augurs, and well might he do so, not less darkly, as to 'the Aston speculation'—that is, the bulky collection entitled 'Tixall poetry.' 'Over this,' he says, 'the (Edinburgh) Review of the Sadler has thrown a heavy cloud—the fact is, it seems to me to have ruined it. Here is the same editor and the same printer, and your name withdrawn. I hope you agree with John and me that this Aston business ought to be got rid of at almost any sacrifice. We could not now even ask a London bookseller to take a share, and a net outlay of near £2500, upon a worse than doubtful speculation, is surely "most tolerable and not to be endured."'

Another unpromising adventure of this season was the publication of the History of the Culdees (that is, of the clergy of the primitive Scoto-Celtic Church), by Scott's worthy old friend, Dr. John Jamieson, the author of the celebrated Dictionary. This work, treating of an obscure subject, on which very different opinions were and are entertained by Episcopalians on the one hand, and the adherents of Presbyterianism on the other, was also printed and published by the Ballantynes, in consequence of the interest which Scott felt, not for the writer's hypothesis, but for the writer personally : and the result was another heavy loss to himself and his partners. But a far more serious business was the establishment of the Edinburgh Annual Register, which, as we have seen, was suggested by Scott in the very dawn of his bookselling projects. The two first volumes were issued about this time, and expectation had been highly excited by the announcement that the historical department was in the hands of Southey, while Scott and many other eminent persons were to contribute regularly to its miscellaneous literature and science. Mr. Southey was fortunate in beginning his narrative with the great era of the Spanish Revolt against Napoleon, and it exhibited his usual research, reflection, elegance, and spirit. Several of the miscellanies, also, were admirable : Mr. Southey inserted in the second volume for 1808, published in 1810, some of the most admired of his minor poems ; —and Scott did the like. He moreover drew up for that volume an Essay of considerable extent on those changes in the Scottish System of Judicature, which had occupied the attention of the Commission under which he served as secretary ; and the sagacity of this piece appears, on the whole, as honourable to him, as the clear felicity of its language. Nevertheless, the public were alarmed by the prospect of two volumes annually : it was, in short, a new periodical publication on a large scale ; all such adventures are hazardous in the extreme ; and none of them ever can succeed, unless there be a skilful bookseller, and a zealous editor, who give a very large share of their industry and intelligence, day after day, to the conduct of all its arrangements. Such a bookseller John Ballantyne was not ; such an editor, with Scott's multifarious engagements, he could not be for an Annual Register ; and who, indeed, could wish that this had been otherwise ? The volumes succeeded each other at irregular intervals; there was soon felt the want of one ever active presiding spirit; and though the work was continued during a long series of years, it never was the source of anything but anxiety and disappointment to its original projectors.

I am tempted, as Scott's Essay on Judicial Reform has never been included in any collection of his writings, to extract here a few specimens of a composition which appears to be as characteristic of the man as any that ever proceeded from his pen. His deep jealousy of the national honour of Scotland, his fear lest the course of innovation at this time threatened should end in a total assimilation of her Jurisprudence to the system of the more powerful sister country, and his habitual and deep-rooted dread of change in matters affecting the whole machinery of social existence, are expressed in, among others, the following passages:—

> An established system is not to be tried by those tests which may with perfect correctness be applied to a new theory. A civilized nation, long in possession of a code of law, under which, with all its inconveniences, they have found means to flourish, is not to be regarded as an infant colony, on which experiments in legislation may, without much charge of presumption, be hazarded. A philosopher is not entitled to investigate such a system by those ideas which he has fixed in his own mind as the standard of possible excellence. The only unerring test of every old establishment is the *effect* it has actually produced; for that must be held to be good, from whence good is derived. The people have, by degrees, moulded their habits to the law they are compelled to obey; for some of its imperfections, remedies have been found; to others they have reconciled themselves; till, at last, they have, from various causes, attained the object which the most sanguine visionary could promise to himself from his own perfect *unembodied* system. Let us not be understood to mean that a superstitious regard for antiquity ought to stay the hand of a temperate reform. But the task is delicate, and full of danger; perilous in its execution, and extremely doubtful in its issue. Is there not rational ground to apprehend that, in attempting to eradicate the disease, the sound part of the constitution may be essentially injured? Can we be quite certain that less inconvenience will result from that newly discovered and unknown remedy, than from the evil, which the juices and humours with which it has long been incorporated may have neutralized?—that, after a thorough reformation has been achieved, it may not be found necessary to counterwork the antidote itself, by having recourse to the very error we have incautiously abjured? We are taught, by great authority, that 'possibly they may espy something that may, in

truth, be mischievous in some particular case, but weigh not how many inconveniences are, on the other side, prevented or remedied by that which is the supposed vicious strictness of the law; and he that purchases a reformation of a law with the introduction of greater inconveniences, by the amotion of a mischief, makes an ill bargain. No human law can be absolutely perfect. It is sufficient that it be best *ut plurimum;* and as to the mischiefs that it occasions, as they are accidental and casual, so they may be oftentimes, by due care, prevented, without an alteration of the main.'[1]

Every great reform, we farther conceive, ought to be taken at a point somewhat lower than the necessity seems to require. Montesquieu has a chapter, of which the title is, *Qu'il ne faut pas tout corriger*. Our improvement ought to contain within itself a principle of progressive improvement. We are thus enabled to see our way distinctly before us; we have, at the same time, under our eyes, the ancient malady, with the palliatives by which the hand of time has controlled its natural symptoms, and the effects arising from the process intended to remove it; and our course, whether we advance or recede, will be safe, and confident, and honourable; whereas, by taking our reform at the utmost possible stretch of the wrong complained of, we cannot fail to bring into disrepute the order of things, as established, without any corresponding certainty that our innovations will produce the result which our sanguine hopes have anticipated; and we thus deprive ourselves of the chance of a secure retreat, in the event of our failure.

Nor does the following paragraph on the proposal for extending to Scotland the system of *Jury Trial* in civil actions *of all classes*, appear to me less characteristic of Scott:—

We feel it very difficult to associate with this subject any idea of political or personal liberty; both of which have been supposed to be secured, and even to be rendered more valuable, by means of the trial by jury in questions of private right. It is perhaps owing to our want of information, or to the phlegm and frigidity of our national character, that we cannot participate in that enthusiasm which the very name of this institution is said to excite in many a patriotic bosom. We can listen to the cabalistic sound of Trial by Jury, which has produced effects only to be paralleled by those of the mysterious words uttered by the Queen of the City of Enchantments, in the Arabian Tale, and retain the entire possession of our form and senses. We understand that sentiment of a celebrated author, that this barrier against the usurpation of power, in matters where power has any concern, may probably avert from our island the fate of many states that now exist but in history; and we think this great possession is peculiarly valuable in Scotland, where the privileges of the public prosecutor are not controlled by those of a grand jury. The merits of the establishment we are now examining are to be ascertained by a different test. It is merely a contrivance for attaining the ends of private justice, for developing the merits of a civil question in which individuals are interested; and that contrivance is the best which most speedily and effectually serves the purpose for which it was framed. In causes of that description, no shield is necessary against the invasion of power; the issue is to be investigated without leaning or partiality, for whatever is unduly given to one party is unduly wrested from the other; and unless we take under our consideration those advantages which time or accident may have introduced, we see not what superiority can in the abstract be supposed to belong to this as a judicature for the determination of all or the greater number of civil actions. We discover no ground for suspecting that the judgments of a few well-educated and upright men may be influenced by any undue bias; that an interest merely patrimonial, if more safely lodged in an obscure and evanescent body than in a dignified, independent, and permanent tribunal, versed in the science to be administered, and responsible for the decisions they pronounce;—and we suspect that a philosopher, contemplating both in his closet, will augur more danger from a system which devolves on one set of men the responsibility of doctrines taught them by another, than from that system which attaches to the judges all the consequences of the law they deliver.

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[1] Lord Hale on the Amendment of the Laws.

Some, though not all, of the changes deprecated in this Essay, had been adopted by the Legislature before it was published; others of them have since been submitted to experiment; and I believe that, on the whole, his views may safely bear the test to which time has exposed them—though as to the particular point of *trial by jury in civil causes*, the dreaded innovation, being conducted by wise and temperate hands, has in its results proved satisfactory to the people at large, as well as to the Bench and the Bar of Scotland. I have, however, chiefly introduced the above extracts as illustrative of the dissatisfaction with which Scott considered the commencement of a *system* of jurisprudential innovation; and though it must not be forgotten that his own office as a Clerk of Session had never yet brought him anything but labour, and that he consequently complained from time to time of the inroads this labour made on hours which might otherwise have been more profitably bestowed, I suspect his antipathy to this new system, as a system, had no small share in producing the state of mind indicated in a remarkable letter addressed, in the later part of this year, to his brother Thomas. The other source of uneasiness to which it alludes has been already touched upon—and we shall have but too much of it hereafter. He says to his brother (Ashestiel, 1st November 1810), 'I have no objection to tell you in confidence, that, were Dundas to go out Governor-General to India, and were he willing to take me with him in a good situation, I would not hesitate to pitch the Court of Session and the booksellers to the Devil, and try my fortune in another climate.' He adds, 'but this is strictly *entre nous*'—nor indeed was I aware, until I found this letter, that he had ever entertained such a design as that which it communicates. Mr. Dundas (now Lord Melville), being deeply conversant in our Eastern affairs, and highly acceptable to the Court of Directors in the office of President of the Board of Control, which he had long filled, was spoken of, at various times in the course of his public life, as likely to be appointed Governor-General of India. He had, no doubt, hinted to Scott that in case he should ever assume that high station it would be very agreeable for him to be accompanied by his early friend: and there could be little question of his capacity to have filled with distinction the part either of an Indian secretary or of an Indian judge.

But, though it is easy to account for his expressing in so marked a manner at this particular period his willingness to relinquish literature as the main occupation of his time; it is impossible to consider the whole course of his correspondence and conversation, without agreeing in the conclusion of Mr. Morritt, that he was all along sincere in the opinion that literature ought never to be ranked on the same scale of importance with the conduct of business in any of the great departments of public life. This opinion he always expressed; and I have no doubt that, at any period preceding his acquisition of a landed property, he would have acted on it, even to the extent of leaving Scotland, had a suitable opportunity been afforded him to give that evidence of his sincerity. This is so remarkable a feature in his character, that the reader will forgive me should I recur to it in the sequel.

At the same time I have no notion that at this or any other period he contemplated abandoning literature. Such a thought would hardly enter the head of the man, not yet forty years of age, whose career had been one of unbroken success, and whose third great work had just been received with a degree of favour, both critical and popular, altogether unprecedented in the annals of his country. His hope, no doubt, was that an honourable official station in the East might afford him both a world of new materials for poetry, and what would in his case be abundance of leisure for turning them to account, according to the deliberate dictates of his own judgment. What he desired to escape from was not the exertion of his genius, which must ever have been to him the source of his most exquisite enjoyment, but the daily round of prosaic and perplexing toils which his connexion with the Ballantynes had involved him. He was able to combine the regular discharge of such functions with the exercise of the high powers of imagination, in a manner of which history affords no other example; yet many, no doubt, were the weary hours, when he repented him of the rash engagements which had imposed such a burden of mere taskwork on his energies. But his external position, before the lapse of another year, underwent a change, which for ever fixed his destiny to the soil of his best affections and happiest inspirations.

The letters of Scott to all his friends have sufficiently shown the unflagging interest with which, among all his personal labours and anxieties, he watched the progress of the great contest in the Peninsula. It was so earnest, that he never on any journey, not even in his very frequent passages between Edinburgh and Ashestiel, omitted to take with him the largest and best map he had been able to procure of the seat of war; upon this he was perpetually poring, tracing the marches and countermarches of the French and English by means of black and white pins; and not seldom did Mrs. Scott complain of this constant occupation of his attention and her carriage. In the beginning of 1811, a committee was formed in London to collect subscriptions for the relief of the Portuguese, who had seen their lands wasted, their vines torn up, and their houses burnt in the course of Massena's last unfortunate campaign; and Scott, on reading the advertisement, immediately addressed Mr. Whitmore, the chairman, begging that the committee would allow him to contribute to their fund the profits, to whatever they might amount, of a poem which he proposed to write upon a subject connected with the localities of the patriotic struggle. His offer was of course accepted; and 'THE VISION OF DON RODERICK' was begun as soon as the Spring vacation enabled him to retire to Ashestiel.

On the 26th of April he writes thus to Mr. Morritt, who had lost a dear young friend in the battle of Barossa:—

'I rejoice with the heart of a Scotsman in the success of Lord Wellington, and with all the pride of a seer to boot. I have been for three years proclaiming him as the only man we had to trust to—a man of talent and genius—not deterred by obstacles, not fettered by prejudices, not immured within the pedantries of his profession—but playing the general and the hero, when most of our military commanders would have exhibited the drill sergeant, or at best the adjutant. These campaigns will teach us what we have long needed to know, that success depends not on the nice drilling of regiments, but upon the grand movements and combinations of an army. We have been hitherto polishing hinges, when we should have studied the mechanical union of a huge machine. Now—our army begin to see that the *grand secret*, as the French call it, consists only in union, joint exertion, and concerted movement. This will enable us to meet the dogs on fair terms as to numbers, and for the rest, "My soul and body on the action both."

'The downfall of Buonaparte's military fame will be the signal of his ruin, and, if we may trust the reports this day brings us from Holland, there is glorious mischief on foot already. I hope we shall be able to fling fuel into the flame immediately. A country with so many dykes and ditches must be fearfully tenable when the peasants are willing to fight. How I should enjoy the disconsolate visages of those Whig dogs, those dwellers upon the Isthmus, who have been foretelling the rout and ruin which it only required their being in power to have achieved! It is quite plain, from Sir Robert Wilson's account, that they neglected to feed the lamp of Russia, and it only resulted from their want of opportunity that they did not quench the smoking flax in the Peninsula—a thought so profligate, that those who from party or personal interest indulged it ought to pray for mercy, and return thanks for the providential interruption which obstructed their purpose, as they would for a meditated but prevented parricide. But enough of the thorny subject of politics.

'I grieve for your loss at Barossa, but what more glorious fall could a man select for himself or friend than dying with his sword in hand and the cry of victory in his ears?

'As for my own operations they are very trifling, though sufficiently miscellaneous. I have been writing a sketch of Buonaparte's tactics for the Edinburgh Register, and some other trumpery of the same kind. Particularly I meditate some wild stanzas referring to the Peninsula: if I can lick them into any shape I hope to get something handsome from the booksellers for the Portuguese sufferers: "Silver and gold have I none, but that which I have I will give unto them." My lyrics are called the Vision of Don Roderick: you remember the story of the last Gothic King of Spain descending into an enchanted cavern to know the fate of the Moorish invasion—that is my machinery. Pray don't mention this, for some one will snatch up the subject, as I have been served before: and I have not written a line yet. I am going to Ashestiel for eight days, to fish and rhyme.'

The poem was published, in 4to, in July; and the immediate proceeds were forwarded to the board in London. His friend the Earl of Dalkeith seems to have been a member of the committee, and he writes thus to Scott on the occasion :—'Those with ample fortunes and thicker heads may easily give 100 guineas to a subscription, but the man is really to be envied who can draw that sum from his own brains, and apply the produce so beneficially and to so exalted a purpose.'

In the original preface to this poem, Scott alludes to two events which had 'cruelly interrupted his task'—the successive deaths of his kind friend the Lord President of the Court of Session (Blair),[1] and his early patron, Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville: and his letters at the time afford additional evidence of the shock his feelings had thus sustained.—

The following, to Mrs. Scott of Harden, is dated May 20th, 1811 :—

'My dear Madam—We are deprived of the prospect of waiting upon you on the birth-day, by the confusion into which the business of this court is thrown by the most unexpected and irreparable loss which it has sustained in the death of the President. It is scarcely possible to conceive a calamity which is more universally, or will be so long, felt by the country. His integrity and legal knowledge, joined to a peculiar dignity of thought, action, and expression, had begun to establish in the minds of the public at large that confidence in the regular and solemn adminstration of justice, which is so necessary to its usefulness and respectability. My official situation, as well as the private intimacy of our families, makes me a sincere mourner on this melancholy occasion, for I feel a severe personal deprivation, besides the general share of sorrow common to all of every party or description who were in the way of witnessing his conduct.

'He was a rare instance of a man whose habits were every way averse to the cultivation of popularity, rising, nevertheless, to the highest point in the public opinion, by the manly and dignified discharge of his duty. I have been really so much shocked and out of spirits, yesterday and the day preceding, that I can write and think of nothing else.

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[1] The Right Hon. Robert Blair of Avontoun, son of the Author of 'The Grave.'

'I have to send you the Vision of Don Roderick, as soon as we can get it out—it is a trifle I have written to eke out the subscription for the suffering Portuguese. —Believe me, my dear Mrs. Scott, ever yours most truly and respectfully, WALTER SCOTT.'

The next letter is to Mr. Morritt, who, like himself, had enjoyed a large share of Lord Melville's friendly regard; and had more than once met his Lordship, after his fall, at the Poet's house, in Castle Street; where, by the way, the old Statesman entered with such simple-heartedness into all the ways of the happy circle, that it had come to be an established rule for the children *to sit up to supper* whenever Lord Melville dined there.

'EDINBURGH, *July* 1, 1811.

'MY DEAR M.—I have this moment got your kind letter, just as I was packing up Don Roderick for you. This patriotic puppet-show has been finished under wretched auspices; poor Lord Melville's death so quickly succeeding that of President Blair, one of the best and wisest judges that ever distributed justice, broke my spirit sadly. My official situation placed me in daily contact with the President, and his ability and candour were the source of my daily admiration. As for poor dear Lord Melville, "'Tis vain to name him whom we mourn in vain." Almost the last time I saw him, he was talking of you in the highest terms of regard, and expressing great hopes of again seeing you at Dunira this summer, where I proposed to attend you. *Hei mihi! quid hei mihi? humana perpessi sumus.* His loss will be long and severely felt here, and Envy is already paying her cold tribute of applause to the worth which she maligned while it walked upon earth.

'There is a very odd coincidence between the deaths of these eminent characters, and that of a very inferior person, a dentist of this city, named Dubisson. He met the President before his death, who used a particular expression in speaking to him; the day before Lord Melville died, he also met Dubisson nearly on the same spot, and to the man's surprise used the President's very words in saluting him. On this second death, he expressed (jocularly, however) an apprehension that he himself would be the third—was taken ill and died in an hour's space. Was not this remarkable?—Yours ever,

'W. S.'

The Vision of Don Roderick had features of novelty, both as to the subject and the manner of the composition, which excited much attention, and gave rise to some sharp controversy. The main fable was indeed from the most picturesque region of old romance; but it was made throughout the vehicle of feelings directly adverse to those with which the Whig critics had all along regarded the interference of Britain in behalf of the nations of the Peninsula; and the silence which, while celebrating our other generals on that scene of action, had been preserved with respect to Scott's own gallant countryman, Sir John Moore, was considered or represented by them as an odious example of genius hoodwinked by the influence of party. Nor were there wanting persons who affected to discover that the charm of Scott's poetry had to a great extent evaporated under the severe test to which he had exposed it, by adopting, in place of those comparatively light and easy measures in which he had hitherto dealt, the most elaborate one that our literature exhibits. The production, notwithstanding the complexity of the Spenserian stanza, had been very rapidly executed; and it shows, accordingly, many traces of negligence. But the patriotic inspiration of it found an echo in the vast majority of British hearts; many of the Whig oracles themselves acknowledged that the difficulties of the metre had been on the whole successfully overcome; and even the hardest critics were compelled to express unqualified admiration of various detached pictures and passages, which, in truth, as no one now disputes, neither he nor any other poet ever excelled. The whole setting or framework—whatever relates in short to the last of the Goths himself—was, I think, even then unanimously pronounced admirable; and no party feeling could blind any man to the heroic splendour of such stanzas as those in which the three equally gallant elements of a British army are contrasted. I incline to believe that the choice of the measure had been in no small degree the result of those hints which Scott received on the subject of his favourite octosyllabics, more especially from Ellis and Canning; and, as we shall see presently, he about this time made more than one similar experiment, in all likelihood from the same motive.

Of the letters which reached him in consequence of the appearance of The Vision, he has preserved several, which had no doubt interested and gratified him at the time. One of these was from Lady Wellington, to whom he had never had the honour of being presented, but who could not, as she said, remain silent on the receipt of such a tribute to the fame of 'the first and best of men.' Ever afterwards she continued to correspond with him, and indeed, among the very last letters which the Duchess of Wellington appears to have written, was a most affecting one, bidding him farewell, and thanking him for the solace his works had afforded her during her fatal illness. Another was in these terms:—

'*To Walter Scott, Esq.*

'HINCKLEY, *July* 26, 1811.

'MY DEAR SIR—I am very glad that you have essayed a new metre—new I mean for you to use. That which you have chosen is perhaps at once the most artificial and the most magnificent that our language affords; and your success in it ought to encourage you to believe, that for you, at least, the majestic march of Dryden (to my ear the perfection of harmony) is not, as you seem to pronounce it, irrecoverable. Am I wrong in imagining that *Spenser* does not use the *plusquam-Alexandrine*—the verse which is as much longer than an Alexandrine, as an Alexandrine is longer than an ordinary heroic measure? I have no books where I am, to which to refer. You use this—and in the first stanza.

'Your poem has been met on my part by an exchange somewhat like that of Diomed's armour against Glaucus's—brass for gold—a heavy speech upon bullion. If you have never thought upon the subject—as to my great contentment I never had a twelvemonth ago—let me counsel you to keep clear of it, and forthwith put my speech into the fire, unread. It has no one merit but that of sincerity. I formed my opinion most reluctantly; having formed it, I could not but maintain it; having maintained it in Parliament, I wished to record it intelligibly. But it is one which, so far from cherishing and wishing to make proselytes to, I would much rather renounce, if I could find a person to convince me that it is erroneous. This is at least an unusual state of mind in controversy. It is such as I do not generally profess on all subjects—such as you will give me credit for not being able to maintain, for instance, when either the exploits which you celebrate in your last poem, or your manner of celebrating them, are disputed or disparaged.—Believe me, with great regard and esteem, very sincerely yours,

'GEORGE CANNING.'

But, of all the letters addressed to the author of the Vision of Don Roderick, I am very sure no one was so welcome as that which reached him, some months after his poem had ceased to be new in England, from a dear friend of his earliest days, who, after various chances and changes of life, was then serving in Lord Wellington's army, as a captain in the 58th regiment. I am sure that Sir Adam Fergusson's good-nature will pardon my inserting here some extracts from a communication which his affectionate schoolfellow very often referred to in after-years with the highest appearance of interest and pleasure.

'*To Walter Scott, Esq.*

'LISBON, 31*st August* 1811.

'MY DEAR WALTER—After such a length of silence between us, and, I grant on my part, so unwarrantable, I think I see your face of surprise on recognising this MS., and hear you exclaim—What strange wind has blown a letter from *Linton?* I must say, that although both you and my good friend Mrs. S. must long ago have set me down as a most indifferent, not to say ungrateful sort of gentleman, far otherwise has been the case, as in the course of my wanderings through this country I have often beguiled a long march, or watchful night's duty, by thinking on the merry fireside in North Castle Street. However, the irregular roving life we lead, always interfered with my resolves of correspondence.

'But now, quitting self, I need not tell you how greatly I was delighted at the success of the Lady of the Lake. I daresay you are by this time well tired of such greetings—so I shall only say, that last spring I was so fortunate as to get a reading of it, when in the lines of Torres Vedras, and thought I had no inconsiderable right to enter into and judge of its beauties, having made one of the party on your first visit to the Trossachs; and you will allow, that a little vanity on my part on this account (everything considered) was natural enough. While the book was in my possession, I had nightly invitations to *evening parties!* to read and illustrate passages of it; and I must say that (though not conscious of much merit in the way of recitation) my attempts to do justice to the grand opening of the stag-hunt were always followed with bursts of applause—for this Canto was the favourite among the rough sons of the fighting Third Division. At that time supplies of various kinds, especially anything in the way of delicacies, were very scanty; and, in gratitude, I am bound to declare that to the good offices of the Lady I owed many a nice slice of ham, and rummer of hot punch, which, I assure you, were amongst the most welcome favours that one officer could bestow on another, during the long rainy nights of last January and February. By desire of my messmates of the Black-cuffs, I some time ago sent a commission to London for a copy of the music of the Boat-Song, "Hail to the Chief," as performed at Covent Garden, but have not yet got it. If you can assist in this, I need not say that on every performance a flowing bumper will go round to the Bard. We have lately been fortunate in getting a good master to our band, who is curious in old Scotch and Irish airs, and has harmonized *Johnny Cope*, etc. etc. . . .'

'LISBON, *6th October*.

'I had written all the foregoing botheration, intending to send it by a wounded friend going home to Scotland, when, to my no small joy, your parcel, enclosing Don Roderick, reached me. How kind I take it your remembering old Linton in this way. A day or two after I received yours, I was sent into the Alentejo, where I remained a month, and only returned a few days ago, much delighted with the trip. You wish to know how I like the Vision; but as you can't look for any learned critique from me, I shall only say that I fully entered into the spirit and beauty of it, and that I relished much the wild and fanciful opening of the introductory part; yet what particularly delighted me were the stanzas announcing the approach of the British fleets and armies to this country, and the three delightful ones descriptive of the different troops, English, Scotch, and Irish; and I can assure you the Pats are, to a man, enchanted with the picture drawn of their countrymen, and the mention of the great man himself. Your swearing, in the true character of a minstrel, "shiver my harp, and burn its every chord," amused me not a little. From being well acquainted with a great many of the situations described, they had of course the more interest, and "Grim Busaco's iron ridge" most happily paints the appearance of that memorable field. You must know that we have got with us some bright geniuses, natives of the *dear country*, and who go by the name of "the poets." Of course, a present of this kind is not thrown away upon indifferent subjects, but it is read and repeated with all the enthusiasm your warmest wish could desire. Should it be my fate to survive, I am resolved to try my hand on a snug little farm either up or down the Tweed, somewhere in your neighbourhood; and on this dream many a delightful castle do I build.

'I am most happy to hear that the Club[1] goes on in the old smooth style. I am afraid, however, that now * * * has become a judge, the delights of *Scrogum* and *The Tailor* will be lost, till revived perhaps by the old croupier in the shape of a battered half-pay officer.—Yours affectionately, ADAM FERGUSSON.'

More than one of the gallant captain's *chateaux en Espagne* were, as we shall see, realized in the sequel. I must not omit a circumstance which had reached Scott from another source, and which he always took special pride in relating, namely, that in the course of the day when the Lady of the Lake first reached Sir Adam Fergusson, he was posted with his company on a point of ground exposed to the enemy's artillery; somewhere no doubt on the lines of Torres Vedras. The men were ordered to lie prostrate on the ground; while they kept that attitude, the Captain, kneeling at their head, read aloud the description of the battle in Canto VI., and the listening soldiers only interrupted him by a joyous huzza, whenever the French shot struck the bank close above them.

The only allusion which I have found, in Scott's letters, to the Edinburgh Review on his Vision, occurs in a letter to Mr. Morritt (26th September 1811), which also contains the only hint of his having been about this time requested to undertake the task of rendering into English the *Charlemagne* of Lucien Buonaparte. He says—'The Edinburgh Reviewers have been down on my poor Don hand to fist; but, truly, as they are too fastidious to approve of the campaign, I should be very unreasonable if I expected them to like the celebration of it. I agree with them, however, as to the lumbering weight of the stanza, and I shrewdly suspect it would require a very great poet indeed to prevent the tedium arising from the recurrence of rhymes. Our language is unable to support the expenditure of so many for each stanza: even Spenser himself, with all the license of using obsolete words and uncommon spellings, sometimes fatigues the ear. They are also very wroth with me for omitting the merits of Sir John Moore; but as I never exactly discovered in what these lay, unless in conducting his advance and retreat upon a plan the most likely to verify the desponding speculations of the foresaid reviewers, I must hold myself excused for not giving praise where I was unable to see that much was due. The only literary news I have to send you is, that Lucien Buonaparte's epic, in twenty-four *chants*, is about to appear. An application was made to me to translate it, which I negatived of course, and that roundly.'[1]

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[1] See *ante*, vol. i. p. 180.

I have alluded to some other new experiments in versification about this time as probably originating in the many hints of Ellis, Canning, and probably of Erskine, that, if he wished to do himself full justice in poetical narration, he ought to attempt at least the rhyme of Dryden's Fables. Having essayed the most difficult of all English measures in Don Roderick, he this year tried also the heroic couplet, and produced that imitation of Crabbe, *The Poacher*—on seeing which, Crabbe, as his son's biography tells us, exclaimed, 'This man, whoever he is, can do all that I can, and *something more*.' This piece, together with some verses, afterwards worked up into the Bridal of Triermain, and another fragment in imitation of Moore's Lyrics, when first forwarded to Ballantyne, were accompanied with a little note, in which he says—'Understand, I have no idea of parody, but serious imitation, if I can accomplish it. The subject for my Crabbe is a character in his line which he has never touched. I think of Wordsworth, too, and perhaps a ghost story after Lewis. I should be ambitious of trying Campbell; but his peculiarity consists so much in the matter, and so little in the manner, that (to his praise be it spoken) I rather think I cannot touch him.' The three imitations which he did execute appeared in the Edinburgh Register for 1809, published in the autumn of 1811. They were there introduced by a letter entitled The Inferno of Altisidora, in which he shadows out the chief reviewers of the day, especially his friends Jeffrey and Gifford, with admirable breadth and yet lightness of pleasantry. He kept his secret as to this Inferno, and all its appendages, even from Miss Baillie—to whom he says, on their appearance, that—'the imitation of Crabbe had struck him as good; that of Moore as bad; and that of himself as beginning well, but falling off grievously to the close.' He seems to have been equally mysterious as to an imitation of the quaint love verses of the beginning of the 17th century, which had found its way shortly before into the newspapers, under the name of The Resolve;[1] but I find him acknowledging its parentage to his brother Thomas, whose sagacity had at once guessed at the truth. 'As to the Resolve,' he says, 'it is mine; and it is not—or, to be less enigmatical, it is an old fragment, which I coopered up into its present state with the purpose of quizzing certain judges of poetry, who have been extremely delighted, and declare that no living poet could write in the same exquisite taste.' These critics were his Friends of the Friday Club. When included in the Register, however, the Resolve had his name affixed to it. In that case his concealment had already answered its purpose. It is curious to trace the beginnings of the systematic mystification which he afterwards put in practice with regard to the most important series of his works.

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[1] The ponderous epic entitled *Charlemagne ou l'Eglise Delivrée* was published in 1814; and an English version, by the Rev. S. Butler and the Rev. F. Hodgson, appeared in 1815. 2 vols. 4to.

The quarto edition of Don Roderick having rapidly gone off, instead of reprinting the poem as usual in a separate octavo, he inserted it entire in the current volume of the Register; a sufficient proof how much that undertaking was already felt to require extraordinary exertion on the part of its proprietors. Among other minor tasks of the same year, he produced an edition of Wilson's Secret History of the Court of King James I., in two vols. 8vo, to which he supplied a copious preface, and a rich body of notes. He also contributed two or three articles to the Quarterly Review.

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[1] See Poetical Works, Edition 1834, vol. viii. p. 374.

CHAPTER XXIII

New Arrangement concerning the Clerks of Session—Scott's first purchase of Land—Abbotsford; Turn-again, etc.—Joanna Baillie's Orra, etc.—Death of James Grahame—and of John Leyden.

1811

THROUGHOUT 1811, Scott's serious labour continued to be bestowed on the advancing edition of Swift; but this and all other literary tasks were frequently interrupted in consequence of an important step which he took early in the year; namely, the purchase of the first portion of what became in the sequel an extensive landed property in Roxburghshire. He had now the near prospect of coming into the beneficial use of the office he had so long filled without emolument in the Court of Session. For, connected with the other reforms in the Scotch judicature was a plan for allowing the retirement of functionaries, who had served to an advanced period of life, upon pensions; should this meet the approbation of parliament, there was little doubt that Mr. George Home would avail himself of the opportunity to resign the place of which he had for five years executed none of the duties; and the second Lord Melville, who had now succeeded his father as the virtual Minister for Scotland, had so much at heart a measure in itself obviously just and prudent, that little doubt could be entertained of the result of his efforts in its behalf. The Clerks of Session, it had been already settled, were henceforth to be paid not by fees, but by fixed salaries; the amount of each salary, it was soon after arranged, should be £1300 per annum; and contemplating a speedy accession of professional income so considerable as this, and at the same time a vigorous prosecution of his literary career, Scott fixed his eyes on a small farm within a few miles of Ashestiel, which it was understood would presently be in the market, and resolved to place himself by its acquisition in the situation to which he had probably from his earliest days looked forward as the highest object of ambition, that of a Tweedside Laird.—*Sit mihi sedes utinam senectæ!*

And the place itself, though not to the general observer a very attractive one, had long been one of peculiar interest for him. I have often heard him tell, that when travelling in his boyhood with his father, from Selkirk to Melrose, the old man suddenly desired the carriage to halt at the foot of an eminence, and said, 'We must get out here, Walter, and see a thing quite in your line.' His father then conducted him to a rude stone on the edge of an acclivity about half a mile above the Tweed at Abbotsford, which marks the spot—

> Where gallant Cessford's life-blood dear
> Reeked on dark Elliott's border spear.

This was the conclusion of the battle of Melrose, fought in 1526, between the Earls of Angus and Home, and the two chiefs of the race of Kerr on the one side, and Buccleuch on the other, in sight of the young King James V., the possession of whose person was the object of the contest. This battle is often mentioned in the Border Minstrelsy, and the reader will find a long note on it, under the lines which I have just quoted from the Lay of the Last Minstrel. In the names of various localities between Melrose and Abbotsford, such as *Skirmish-field*, *Charge-Law*, and so forth, the incidents of the fight have found a lasting record; and the spot where the retainer of Buccleuch terminated the pursuit of the victors by the mortal wound of Kerr of Cessford (ancestor of the Dukes of Roxburghe) has always been called *Turn-again*. In his own future domain the young minstrel had before him the scene of the last great Clan-battle of the Borders.

On the 12th of May 1811, he writes to James Ballantyne, apologizing for some delay about proof-sheets. 'My attention,' he adds, 'has been a little dissipated by considering a plan for my own future comfort, which I hasten to mention to you. My lease of Ashestiel is out—I now sit a tenant at will under a heavy rent, and at all the inconvenience of one when in the house of another. I have, therefore, resolved to purchase a piece of ground sufficient for a cottage and a few fields. There are two pieces, either of which would suit me, but both would make a very desirable property indeed. They stretch along the Tweed, near half-way between Melrose and Selkirk, on the opposite side from Lord Somerville, and could be had for between £7000 and £8000—or either separate for about half the sum. I have serious thoughts of one or both, and must have recourse to my pen to make the matter easy. The worst is the difficulty which John might find in advancing so large a sum as the copyright of a new poem; supposing it to be made payable within a year at farthest from the work going to press,—which would be essential to my purpose. Yet the Lady of the Lake came soon home. I have a letter this morning giving me good hope of my Treasury business being carried through: if this takes place, I will buy both the little farms, which will give me a mile of the beautiful turn of Tweed, above Gala-foot—if not, I will confine myself to one. As my income, in the event supposed, will be very considerable, it will afford a sinking fund to clear off what debt I may incur in making this purchase. It is proper John and you should be as soon as possible apprized of these my intentions, which I believe you will think reasonable in my situation, and at my age, while I may yet hope to sit under the shade of a tree of my own planting. I shall not, I think, want any pecuniary assistance beyond what I have noticed, but of course my powers of rendering it will be considerably limited for a time. I hope this Register will give a start to its predecessors; I assure you I shall spare no pains. John must lend his earnest attention to clear his hands of the quire stock, and to taking in as little as he can unless in the way of exchange; in short, reefing our sails, which are at present too much spread for our ballast.'

He alludes in the same letter to a change in the firm of Messrs Constable, which John Ballantyne had just announced to him; and, although some of his prognostications on this business were not exactly fulfilled, I must quote his expressions for the light they throw on his opinion of Constable's temper and character. 'No association,' he says, 'of the kind Mr. C. proposes, will stand two years with him for its head. His temper is too haughty to bear with the complaints, and to answer all the minute enquiries, which partners of that sort will think themselves entitled to make, and expect to have answered. Their first onset, however, will be terrible, and John must be prepared to lie by. . . . The new poem would help the presses.' The new partners to which he refers were Mr. Robert Cathcart of Drum, Writer to the Signet, a gentleman of high worth and integrity, who continued to be connected with Constable's business until his death in November 1812; and Mr. Robert Cadell, who afterwards married Mr. Constable's eldest daughter.[1]

Of the two adjoining farms, both of which he had at this time thought of purchasing, he shortly afterwards made up his mind that one would be sufficient to begin with; and he selected that nearest to Ashestiel, and comprising the scene of Cessford's slaughter. The person from whom he bought it was an old friend of his own, whose sterling worth he venerated, and whose humorous conversation rendered him an universal favourite among the gentry of the Forest—the late Rev. Dr. Robert Douglas, minister of Galashiels—the same man to whom Mrs. Cockburn described the juvenile prodigy of George's Square, in November 1777. Dr. Douglas had never resided on the property, and his efforts to embellish it had been limited to one stripe of firs, so long and so narrow that Scott likened it to a black hair-comb. It ran from the precincts of the homestead towards *Turn-again*, and has bequeathed the name of *the Doctor's redding-kame* to the mass of nobler trees amidst which its dark straight line can now hardly be traced. The farm consisted of a rich meadow or haugh along the banks of the river, and about a hundred acres of undulated ground behind, all in a neglected state, undrained, wretchedly enclosed, much of it covered with nothing better than the native heath. The farm-house itself was small and poor, with a common *kail-yard* on one flank, and a staring barn of the Doctor's erection on the other; while in front appeared a filthy pond covered with ducks and duckweed, from which the whole tenement had derived the unharmonious designation of *Clarty Hole*. But the Tweed was everything to him—a beautiful river, flowing broad and bright over a bed of milk-white pebbles, unless here and there where it darkened into a deep pool, overhung as yet only by the birches and alders which had survived the statelier growth of the primitive Forest; and the first hour that he took possession he claimed for his farm the name of the adjoining *ford*, situated just above the influx of the classical tributary Gala. As might be guessed from the name of *Abbotsford*, these lands had all belonged of old to the great abbey of Melrose; and indeed the Duke of Buccleuch, as the territorial representative of that religious brotherhood, still retains some seignorial rights over them, and almost all the surrounding district. Another feature of no small interest in Scott's eyes was an ancient Roman road leading from the Eildon hills to this ford, the remains of which, however, are now mostly sheltered from view amidst his numerous plantations. The most graceful and picturesque of all the monastic ruins in Scotland, the Abbey of Melrose itself, is visible from many points in the immediate neighbourhood of the house; and last, not least, on the rising ground full in view across the river, the traveller may still observe the chief traces of that ancient British barrier, the *Catrail*, of which the reader has seen frequent mention in Scott's early letters to Ellis, when investigating the antiquities of Reged and Strathclyde.

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[1] This union was dissolved by the death of the lady within a year of the marriage. Mr. Cadell, not long after the catastrophe of 1826, became sole publisher of Scott's later works.

Such was the territory on which Scott's prophetic eye already beheld rich pastures, embosomed among flourishing groves, where his children's children should thank the founder. But the state of his feelings when he first called these fields his own, will be best illustrated by a few extracts from his letters. To his brother-in-law, Mr. Carpenter, he thus writes, from Ashestiel, on the 5th of August—

'As my lease of this place is out, I have bought, for about £4000, a property in the neighbourhood, extending along the banks of the river Tweed for about half a mile. It is very bleak at present, having little to recommend it but the vicinity of the river; but as the ground is well adapted by nature to grow wood, and is considerably various in form and appearance, I have no doubt that by judicious plantations it may be rendered a very pleasant spot; and it is at present my great amusement to plan the various lines which may be necessary for that purpose. The farm comprehends about a hundred acres, of which I shall keep fifty in pasture and tillage, and plant all the rest, which will be a very valuable little possession in a few years, as wood bears a high price among us. I intend building a small cottage here for my summer abode, being obliged by law, as well as induced by inclination, to make this country my residence for some months every year. This is the greatest incident which has lately taken place in our domestic concerns, and I assure you we are not a little proud of being greeted as *laird* and *lady* of *Abbotsford*. We will give a grand gala when we take possession of it, and as we are very *clannish* in this corner, all the Scotts in the country, from the Duke to the peasant, shall dance on the green to the bagpipes, and drink whisky punch. Now as this happy festival is to be deferred for more than a twelvemonth, during which our cottage is to be built, etc. etc., what is there to hinder brother and sister Carpenter from giving us their company upon so gratifying an occasion? Pray, do not stay broiling yourself in India for a moment longer than you have secured comfort and competence. Don't look forward to *peace*; it will never come either in your day or mine.'

The same week he says to Joanna Baillie—

'My dreams about my cottage go on; of about a hundred acres I have manfully resolved to plant from sixty to seventy; as to my scale of dwelling—why, you shall see my plan when I have adjusted it. My present intention is to have only two spare bed-rooms, with dressing-rooms, each of which will on a pinch have a couch bed; but I cannot relinquish my Border principle of accommodating all the cousins and *duniwastles*, who will rather sleep on chairs, and on the floor, and in the hay-loft, than be absent when folks are gathered together; and truly I used to think Ashestiel was very much like the tent of Periebanou, in the Arabian Nights, that suited alike all numbers of company equally; ten people fill it at any time, and I remember its lodging thirty-two without any complaint. As for the *go-about* folks, they generally pay their score one way or other; for you who are always in the way of seeing, and commanding, and selecting your society, are too fastidious to understand how a dearth of news may make anybody welcome that can tell one the current report of the day. If it is any pleasure to these stragglers to say I made them welcome as strangers, I am sure that costs me nothing—only I deprecate publication, and am now the less afraid of it that I think scarce any bookseller will be desperate enough to print a new Scottish tour. Besides, one has the pleasure to tell over all the stories that have bored your friends a dozen of times, with some degree of propriety. In short, I think, like a true Scotchman, that a stranger, unless he is very unpleasant indeed, usually brings a title to a welcome along with him; and to confess the truth, I do a little envy my old friend Abonhassan his walks on the bridge of

Bagdad, and evening conversations, and suppers with the guests whom he was never to see again in his life: he never fell into a scrape till he met with the Caliph—and, thank God, no Caliphs frequent the brigg of Melrose, which will be my nearest Rialto at Abbotsford.

'I never heard of a stranger that utterly baffled all efforts to engage him in conversation, excepting one whom an acquaintance of mine met in a stage-coach. My friend,[1] who piqued himself on his talents for conversation, assailed this tortoise on all hands, but in vain, and at length descended to expostulation. "I have talked to you, my friend, on all the ordinary subjects—literature, farming, merchandise—gaming, game-laws, horse-races—suits at law—politics, and swindling, and blasphemy, and philosophy—is there any one subject that you will favour me by opening upon?" The wight writhed his countenance into a grin—"Sir," said he, "can you say anything clever about *bend leather?*" There, I own, I should have been as much nonplussed as my acquaintance; but upon any less abstruse subject, I think, in general, something may be made of a stranger, worthy of his clean sheets, and beef-steak, and glass of port. You, indeed, my dear friend, may suffer a little for me, as I should for you, when such a fortuitous acquaintance talks of the intercourse arising from our meeting as anything beyond the effect of chance and civility: but these braggings break no bones, and are always a compliment to the person of whom the discourse is held, though the narrator means it to himself; for no one can suppose the affectation of intimacy can be assumed unless from an idea that it exalts the person who brags of it. My little folks are well, and I am performing the painful duty of hearing my little boy his Latin lesson every morning; painful, because my knowledge of the language is more familiar than grammatical, and because little Walter has a disconsolate yawn at intervals, which is quite irresistible, and has nearly cost me a dislocation of my jaws.'

In answering the letter which announced the acquisition of Abbotsford, Joanna Baillie says, very prettily:—'Yourself and Mrs. Scott, and the children, will feel sorry at leaving Ashestiel, which will long have a consequence, and be the object of kind feelings with many, from having once been the place of your residence. If I should ever be happy enough to be at Abbotsford, you must take me to see Ashestiel too. I have a kind of tenderness for it, as one has for a man's first wife, when you hear he has married a second.' The same natural sentiment is expressed in a manner characteristically different, in a letter from the Ettrick Shepherd, of about the same date:—'Are you not sorry at leaving *auld Ashestiel* for *gude an' a'*, after having been at so much trouble and expense in making it a complete thing? Upon my word I was, on seeing it in the papers.'

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[1] This friend was Mr. William Clerk.

That Scott had many a pang in quitting a spot which had been the scene of so many innocent and noble pleasures, no one can doubt; but the desire of having a permanent abiding-place of his own, in his ancestorial district, had long been growing upon his mind; and, moreover, he had laboured in adorning Ashestiel, not only to gratify his own taste as a landscape gardener, but because he had for years been looking forward to the day when Colonel Russell[1] would return from India to claim possession of his romantic inheritance. And he was overpaid for all his exertions, when the gallant soldier sat down at length among the trees which an affectionate kinsman had pruned and planted in his absence. He retained, however, to the end of his life, a certain 'tenderness of feeling' towards Ashestiel, which could not perhaps be better shadowed than in Joanna Baillie's similitude. It was not his first country residence—nor could its immediate landscape be said to equal the Vale of the Esk, either in actual picturesqueness, or (before Marmion) in dignity of association. But it was while occupying Ashestiel that he first enjoyed habitually the free presence of wild and solitary nature; and I shall here quote part of a letter, in which he alludes to his favourite wildernesses between Tweed and Yarrow, in language, to my mind, strongly indicative of the regrets and misgivings with which he must have taken his farewell wanderings over them in the summer and autumn of 1811.

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[1] Now Major-General Sir James Russell, K.C.B.

Miss Baillie had then in the press a new volume of Tragedies, but had told her friend that the publication, for booksellers' reasons, would not take place until winter. He answers (August 24th)—'Were it possible for me to hasten the treat I expect by such a composition with you, I would promise to read the volume at the silence of noonday, upon the top of Minchmuir, or Windlestrawlaw. The hour is allowed, by those skilful in demonology, to be as full of witching as midnight itself; and I assure you, I have felt really oppressed with a sort of fearful loneliness, when looking around the naked and towering ridges of desolate barrenness, which is all the eye takes in from the top of such a mountain—the patches of cultivation being all hidden in the little glens and valleys—or only appearing to make one sensible how feeble and inefficient the efforts of art have been to contend with the genius of the soil. It is in such a scene that the unknown author of a fine but unequal poem, called "Albania," places the remarkable superstition which consists in hearing the noise of a chase, with the baying of the hounds, the throttling sobs of the deer, the hollos of a numerous band of huntsmen, and the "hoofs thick beating on the hollow hill." I have often repeated his verses with some sensations of awe in such a place, and I am sure yours would effect their purpose as completely.'[1]

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[1] The lines here alluded to—and which Scott delighted to repeat—are as follows :—

Ere since, of old, the haughty thanes of Ross,—
So to the simple swain tradition tells,—
Were wont with clans, and ready vassals throng'd,
To wake the bounding stag, or guilty wolf,
There oft is heard, at midnight, or at noon,
Beginning faint, but rising still more loud,
And nearer, voice of hunters, and of hounds,
And horns, hoarse winded, blowing far and keen :—
Forthwith the hubbub multiplies ; the gale
Labours with wilder shrieks, and rifer din
Of hot pursuit ; the broken cry of deer
Mangled by throttling dogs ; the shouts of men,

Miss Baillie sent him, as soon as it was printed, the book to which this communication refers ; she told him it was to be her last publication, and that she was getting her knitting needles in order—meaning to begin her new course of industry with a purse, by way of return for his Iona brooch. The poetess mentioned, at the same time, that she had met the evening before with a Scotch lady who boasted that 'she had once been Walter Scott's bedfellow.'—'Don't start,' adds Joanna ; 'it is thirty years since the irregularity took place, and she describes her old bedfellow as the drollest-looking, entertaining little urchin that ever was seen. I told her that you are a great strong man, six feet high, but she does not believe me.' In point of fact, the assigned date was a lady's one ; for the irregularity in question occurred on board the Leith smack which conveyed Walter Scott to London on his way to Bath, when he was only four years of age, A.D. 1775.

Miss Baillie's welcome volume contained, among others, her tragedy on the Passion of Fear ; and Scott gives so much of himself in the letter acknowledging this present, that I must insert it at length.

'*To Miss Joanna Baillie.*

'MY DEAR FRIEND—. . . It is too little to say I am enchanted with the said third volume, especially with the two first plays, which in every point not only sustain, but even exalt your reputation as a dramatist. The whole character of Orra is exquisitely supported as well as imagined, and the language distinguished by a rich variety

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And hoofs, thick beating on the hollow hill.
Sudden the grazing heifer in the vale
Starts at the noise, and both the herdsman's ears
Tingle with inward dread. Aghast, he eyes
The mountains height, and all the ridges round,
Yet not one trace of living wight discerns,
Nor knows, o'erawed, and trembling as he stands,
To what, or whom, he owes his idle fear,
To ghost, to witch, to fairy, or to fiend ;
But wonders, and no end of wondering finds.
Albania—reprinted in *Scottish Descriptive Poems*, pp. 167, 168.

of fancy, which I know no instance of excepting in Shakspeare. After I had read Orra twice to myself, Terry read it over to us a third time, aloud, and I have seldom seen a little circle so much affected as during the whole fifth act. I think it would act charmingly, omitting, perhaps, the baying of the hounds, which could not be happily imitated, and retaining only the blast of the horn and the halloo of the huntsmen at a distance. Only I doubt if we have now an actress that could carry through the mad scene in the fifth act, which is certainly one of the most sublime that ever were written. Yet I have a great quarrel with this beautiful drama, for you must know you have utterly destroyed a song of mine, precisely in the turn of your outlaw's ditty, and sung by persons in somewhat the same situation. I took out my unfortunate manuscript to look at it, but alas! it was the encounter of the iron and the earthen pitchers in the fable. I was clearly sunk, and the potsherds not worth gathering up. But only conceive that the chorus should have run thus *verbatim*—

'Tis mirk midnight with peaceful men,
  With us 'tis dawn of day—

And again—

Then boot and saddle, comrades boon,
  Nor wait the dawn of day.[1]

'I think the Dream extremely powerful indeed, but I am rather glad we did not hazard the representation. It rests so entirely on Osterloo, that I am almost sure we must have made a bad piece of work of it. By the by, a story is told of an Italian buffoon, who had contrived to give his master, a petty prince of Italy, a good hearty ducking, and a fright to boot, to cure him of an ague;

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[1] These lines were accordingly struck out of the outlaw's song in Rokeby. The verses of *Orra*, to which Scott alludes, are no doubt the following:—

'The wild fire dances on the fen,
  The red star sheds its ray,
Up rouse ye, then, my merry men,
  It is our opening day,' etc.

Plays on the Passions, vol. iii. p. 44.

the treatment succeeded, but the potentate, by way of retaliation, had his audacious physician tried for treason, and condemned to lose his head; the criminal was brought forth, the priest heard his confession, and the poor jester knelt down to the block. Instead of wielding his axe, the executioner, as he had been instructed, threw a pitcher of water on the bare neck of the criminal; here the jest was to have terminated, but poor Gonella was found dead on the spot. I believe the catastrophe is very possible.[1] The latter half of the volume I have not perused with the same attention, though I have devoured both the Comedy and the Beacon in a hasty manner. I think the approbation of the public will make you alter your intention of taking up the knitting-needle—and that I shall be as much to seek for my purse as for the bank-notes which you say are to stuff it—though I have no idea where they are to come from. But I shall think more of the purse than the notes, come when or how they may.

'To return, I really think *Fear* the most dramatic passion you have hitherto touched, because capable of being drawn to the most extreme paroxysm on the stage. In Orra you have all gradations, from a timidity excited by a strong and irritable imagination, to the extremity which altogether unhinges the understanding. The most dreadful fright I ever had in my life (being neither constitutionally timid, nor in the way of being exposed to real danger), was in returning from Hampstead the day which I spent so pleasantly with you. Although the evening was nearly closed, I foolishly chose to take the short cut through the fields, and in that enclosure, where the path leads close by a thick and high hedge—with several gaps in it, however—did I meet one of your very thorough-paced London ruffians, at least judging from the squalid and jail-bird appearance and blackguard expression of countenance. Like the man that met the devil, I had nothing to say to him, if he had nothing to say to me, but I could not help looking back to watch the movements of such a suspicious figure, and to my great uneasiness saw him creep through the hedge on my left hand. I instantly went to the first gap to watch his motions, and saw him stooping, as I thought, either to lift a bundle or to speak to some person who seemed lying in the ditch. Immediately after, he came cowering back up the opposite side of the hedge, as returning towards me under cover of it. I saw no weapons he had, except a stick, but as I moved on to gain the stile which was to let me into the free field—with the idea of a wretch springing upon me from the cover at every step I took—I assure you I would not wish the worst enemy I ever had to undergo such a feeling as I had for about five minutes; my fancy made him of that description which usually combines murder with plunder, and though I was well armed with a stout stick and a very formidable knife, which when opened becomes a sort of *skene-dhu*, or dagger, I confess my sensations, though those of a man much resolved not to die like a sheep, were vilely short of heroism; so much so, that when I jumped over the stile, a sliver of the wood run a third of an inch between my nail and flesh, without my feeling the pain, or being sensible such a thing had happened. However, I saw my man no more, and it is astonishing how my spirits rose when I got into the open field;—and when I reached the top of the little mount, and all the bells in London (for aught I know) began to jingle at once, I thought I had never heard anything so delightful in my life—so rapid are the alternations of our feelings. This foolish story,—for perhaps I had no rational ground for the horrible feeling which possessed my mind for a little while, came irresistibly to my pen when writing to you on the subject of terror.

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[1] This story is told, among others, by Montaigne.

'Poor Grahame, gentle, and amiable, and enthusiastic, deserves all you can say of him; his was really a hallowed harp, as he was himself an Israelite without guile. How often have I teazed him, but never out of his good-humour, by praising Dundee and laughing at the Covenanters!—but I beg your pardon; you are a Westland Whig too, and will perhaps make less allowance for a descendant of the persecutors. I think his works should be collected and published for the benefit of his family. Surely the wife and orphans of such a man have a claim on the generosity of the public.[1]

'Pray make my remembrance to the lady who so kindly remembers our early intimacy. I do perfectly remember being an exceedingly spoiled, chattering monkey, whom indifferent health and the cares of a kind Grandmamma and Aunt had made, I suspect, extremely abominable to everybody who had not a great deal of sympathy and good-nature, which I daresay was the case of my *quondam* bedfellow, since she recollects me so favourably. Farewell, and believe me faithfully and respectfully, your sincere friend, WALTER SCOTT.'

Miss Baillie, in her next letter, mentioned the name of the 'old bedfellow,' and that immediately refreshed Scott's recollection. 'I do,' he replies, 'remember *Miss Wright* perfectly well. Oh, how I should like to talk over with her our voyage in the good ship the Duchess of Buccleuch, Captain Beatson, master; much of which, from the novelty doubtless of the scene, is strongly impressed on my memory. A long voyage it was—of twelve days, if I mistake not, with the variety of a day or two in Yarmouth Roads. I believe the passengers had a good deal of fun with me; for I remember being persuaded to shoot one of them with an air-gun, who, to my great terror, lay obstinately dead on the deck, and would not revive till I fell a-crying, which proved the remedy specific upon the occasion.'

The mention of Mr. Terry, in the letter about Orra, reminds me to observe that Scott's intimacy with that gentleman began to make very rapid progress from the date of the first purchase of Abbotsford. He spent several weeks of that autumn at Ashestiel, riding over daily to the new farm, and assisting his friend with advice, which his acquirements as an architect and draughtsman rendered exceedingly valuable, as to the future arrangements about both house and grounds. Early in 1812 Terry proceeded to London, and made, on the 20th May, a very successful *début* on the boards of the Haymarket as Lord Ogleby. He continued, however, to visit Scotland almost every season, and no ally had more to do either with the plans ultimately adopted as to Scott's new structure, or with the collection of literary and antiquarian curiosities which now constitute its museum. From this time the series of letters between them is an ample one. The intelligent zeal with which the actor laboured to promote the gratification of the poet's tastes and fancies on the one side: on the other, Scott's warm anxiety for Terry's professional success, the sagacity and hopefulness with which he counsels and cheers him throughout, and the good-natured confidence with which he details his own projects—both the greatest and the smallest,—all this seems to me to make up a very interesting picture. To none of his later correspondents, with the one exception of Mr. Morritt, does Scott write with a more perfect easy-heartedness than to Terry; and the quaint dramatic turns and allusions with which these letters abound, will remind all who knew him of the instinctive courtesy with which he uniformly adopted, in conversation, a strain the most likely to fall in with the habits of any companion. It has been mentioned that his acquaintance with Terry sprung from Terry's familiarity with the Ballantynes; as it ripened, he had, in fact, learned to consider the ingenious comedian as another brother of that race; and Terry, transplanted to the south, was used and trusted by him, and continued to serve and communicate with him, very much as if one of themselves had found it convenient to establish his headquarters in London.

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[1] James Grahame, author of The Sabbath, had been originally a member of the Scotch Bar, and was an early friend of Scott's. Not succeeding in the law, he (with all his love for the Covenanters) took orders in the Church of England, obtained a curacy in the county of Durham, and died there, on the 14th of September 1811, in the 47th year of his age. See a Memoir of his Life and Writings in the Edinburgh Annual Register for 1812, part ii. pp. 384-415.

Among the letters written immediately after Scott had completed his bargain with Dr. Douglas, is one which (unlike the rest) I found in his own repositories :—

'*For Doctor Leyden, Calcutta.*

'*Favoured by the Hon. Lady Hood.*

'Ashestiel, 25*th August* 1811.

'My dear Leyden—You hardly deserve I should write to you, for I have written you two long letters since I saw Mr. Purves, and received from him your valued dagger,[1] which I preserve carefully till Buonaparte shall come or send for it. I might take a cruel revenge on you for your silence, by declining Lady Hood's request to make you acquainted with her; in which case, I assure you, great would be your loss. She is quite a congenial spirit; an ardent Scotswoman, and devotedly attached to those sketches of traditionary history which all the waters of the Burrampooter cannot, I suspect, altogether wash out of your honour's memory. This, however, is the least of her praises. She is generous, and feeling, and intelligent, and has contrived to keep her heart and social affections broad awake amidst the chilling and benumbing atmosphere of London fashion. I ought perhaps first to have told you that Lady H. *was* the honourable Mary Mackenzie, daughter of Lord Seaforth, and is the wife of Sir Samuel Hood, one of our most distinguished naval heroes, who goes out to take the command in your seas. Lastly, she is a very intimate friend of Mrs. Scott's and myself, and first gained my heart by her admiration of the Scenes of Infancy. So you see, my good friend, what your laziness would have cost you, if, listening rather to the dictates of revenge than generosity, I had withheld my pen from the inkhorn. But, to confess the truth, I fear two such minds would soon have found each other out, like good dancers in a ball-room, without the assistance of a master of ceremonies. So I may even play Sir Clement Cotterel with a good grace, since I cannot further my vengeance by withholding my good offices. My last went by favour of John Pringle,[2] who carried you a copy of the

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[1] A Malay crease, now at Abbotsford.

[2] A son of Mr. Pringle of Whytbank.

Lady of the Lake, a poem which I really think you will like better than Marmion on the whole, though not perhaps in particular passages. Pray let me know if it carried you back to the land of mist and mountain?

'Lady Hood's departure being sudden, and your deserts not extraordinary (speaking as a correspondent), I have not time to write you much news. The best domestic intelligence is, that the Sheriff of Selkirkshire, his lease of Ashestiel being out, has purchased about 100 acres, extending along the banks of the Tweed just above the confluence of the Gala, and about three miles from Melrose. There, saith fame, he designs to bigg himself a bower—*sibi et amicis*—and happy will he be when India shall return you to a social meal at his cottage. The place looks at present very like "poor Scotland's gear." It consists of a bank and haugh as poor and bare as Sir John Falstaff's regiment; though I fear, ere you come to see, the verdant screen I am about to spread over its nakedness will have in some degree removed this reproach. But it has a wild solitary air, and commands a splendid reach of the Tweed; and, to sum all in the words of Touchstone, "it is a poor thing, but mine own."[1]

'Our little folks, whom you left infants, are now shooting fast forward to youth, and show some blood, as far as aptitude to learning is concerned. Charlotte and I are wearing on as easily as this fashious world will permit. The outside of my head is waxing grizzled, but I cannot find that this snow has cooled either my brain or my heart.—Adieu, dear Leyden!—Pray, brighten the chain of friendship by a letter when occasion serves; and believe me ever yours, most affectionately,

'WALTER SCOTT.'

On the 28th of August 1811, just three days after this letter was penned, John Leyden died. On the very day when Scott was writing it, he, having accompanied the Governor-General, Lord Minto, on the expedition against Java, dashed into the surf, that he might be the first Briton in the armament who should set foot on the island. 'When,' says Scott, in his Sketch of Leyden's Life, 'the well-concerted movements of the invaders had given them possession of the town of Batavia, he displayed the same ill-omened precipitation in his haste to examine a library, or rather warehouse of books, in which many Indian MSS. of value were said to be deposited. The apartment had not been regularly ventilated, and either from this circumstance, or already affected by the fatal sickness peculiar to Batavia, Leyden, when he left the place, had a fit of shivering, and declared the atmosphere was enough to give any mortal a fever. The presage was too just. He took to his bed and died in three days, on the eve of the battle which gave Java to the British empire—

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[1] 'An ill-favoured thing, sir, but mine own,' etc.
As You Like It, Act V. Scene 4.

Grata quies patriæ, sed et omnis terra sepulchrum.'[1]

The packet in which Lady Hood, on her arrival in India, announced this event, and returned Scott's unopened letter, contained also a very touching one from the late Sir John Malcolm, who, although he had never at that time seen the poet, assumed, as a brother borderer lamenting a common friend, the language of old acquaintanceship; and to this Scott replied in the same style which, from their first meeting in the autumn of the next year, became that, on both sides, of warm and respectful attachment. I might almost speak in the like tenor of a third letter in the same melancholy packet, from another enthusiastic admirer of Leyden, Mr. Henry Ellis,[2] who also communicated to Scott his spirited stanzas on that untimely fate; but his personal intercourse with this distinguished diplomatist took place at a later period.

Before passing from the autumn of 1811, I may mention, that the letter of James Hogg, from which I have quoted an expression of regret as to Ashestiel, was one of many from the Shepherd, bearing about this date, which Scott esteemed worthy of preservation. Strange as the fact may appear, Hogg, on the other hand, seems to have preserved none of the answers; but the half of the correspondence is quite sufficient to show how constantly and earnestly, in the midst of his own expanding toils and interests, Scott had continued to watch over the struggling fortunes of the wayward and imprudent Shepherd. His letters to the different members of the Buccleuch family at this time are full of the same subject. I shall insert one, addressed, on the 24th of August, to the Countess of Dalkeith, along with a presentation copy of Hogg's 'Forest Minstrel.' It appears to me a remarkable specimen of the simplest natural feelings on more subjects than one, couched in a dialect which, in any hands but the highest, is apt to become a cold one:—

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[1] This little biography of Leyden is included in Scott's Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. iv. p. 137.

[2] Now the Right Honourable Henry Ellis, appointed, in 1836, ambassador from the Court of St. James's to the Shah of Persia.

'ASHESTIEL, *Aug.* 24, 1811.

'DEAR LADY DALKEITH—The Ettrick Bard, who compiled the enclosed collection, which I observe is inscribed to your Ladyship, has made it his request that I would transmit a copy for your acceptance. I fear your Ladyship will find but little amusement in it; for the poor fellow has just talent sufficient to spoil him for his own trade, without having enough to support him by literature. But I embrace the more readily an opportunity of intruding upon your Ladyship's leisure, that I might thank you for the very kind and affecting letter with which you honoured me some time ago. You do me justice in believing that I was deeply concerned at the irreparable loss you sustained in the dear and hopeful boy[1] to whom all the friends of the Buccleuch family looked forward with so much confidence. I can safely say, that since that inexpressible misfortune, I almost felt as if the presence of one, with whom the recollection of past happiness might in some degree be associated, must have awakened and added to your Ladyship's distress, from a feeling that scenes of which we were not to speak, were necessarily uppermost in the recollection of both. But your Ladyship knows better than I can teach, that, where all common topics of consolation would be inapplicable, Heaven provides for us the best and most effectual lenitive in the progress of time, and in the constant and unremitting discharge of the duties incumbent on the station in which we are placed. Those of your Ladyship are important, in proportion to the elevation of your rank, and the promising qualities of the young minds which I have with so much pleasure seen you forming and instructing —to be comforts, I trust, to yourself, and an honour to society. Poor Lady Rosslyn[1] is gone, with all the various talent and vivacity that rendered her society so delightful. I regret her loss the more, as she died without ever making up some unkindness she had towards me for these foolish politics. It is another example of the great truth that life is too short for the indulgence of animosity. I have the honour to be, with the greatest respect, your Ladyship's obliged and very humble servant,

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[1] Lord Scott. See *ante*, vol. i. p. 499.

'WALTER SCOTT.'

The Countess, in acknowledgment of the dedication of the Forest Minstrel, sent Hogg, through Scott's hands, the donation of a hundred guineas—a sum which, to him, in those days, must have seemed a fortune; but which was only the pledge and harbinger of still more important benefits conferred soon after her Ladyship's husband became the head of his house.

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[1] The Countess of Rosslyn, born Lady Harriet Bouverie, a very intimate friend of Lady Dalkeith, died 8th August 1810. She had, as has been mentioned before, written to Scott, resenting somewhat warmly his song at the Melville dinner. See *ante*, vol. i. p. 459.

CHAPTER XXIV

The Poem of Rokeby begun—Correspondence with Mr. Morritt—Death of Henry Duke of Buccleuch—George Ellis—John Wilson—Apprentices of Edinburgh—Scott's 'Nick-Nackatories'—Letter to Miss Baillie on the Publication of Childe Harold—Correspondence with Lord Byron.

1811–1812

Of the £4000 which Scott paid for the original farm of Abbotsford, he borrowed one half from his eldest brother, Major John Scott; the other moiety was raised by the Ballantynes, and advanced on the security of the as yet unwritten, though long meditated, poem of Rokeby. He immediately, I believe by Terry's counsel, requested Mr. Stark of Edinburgh, an architect of whose talents he always spoke warmly, to give him a design for an ornamental cottage in the style of the old English vicarage-house. But before this could be done, Mr. Stark died; and Scott's letters will show how, in the sequel, his building plans, checked for a season by this occurrence, gradually expanded,—until twelve years afterwards the site was occupied not by a cottage but a castle.

His first notions are sketched as follows, in a letter addressed to Mr. Morritt very shortly after the purchase:—'We stay at Ashestiel this season, but migrate the next to our new settlements. I have fixed only two points respecting my intended cottage—one is, that it shall be *in* my garden, or rather kailyard—the other, that the little drawing-room shall open into a little conservatory, in which conservatory there shall be a fountain. These are articles of taste which I have long since determined upon; but I hope before a stone of my paradise is begun, we shall meet and collogue upon it.'

Three months later (December 20th, 1811), he opens the design of his new poem in another letter to the lord of Rokeby, whose household, it appears, had just been disturbed by the unexpected *accouchement* of a fair visitant. The allusion to the Quarterly Review, towards the close, refers to an humorous article on Sir John Sinclair's pamphlets about the Bullion Question—a joint production of Mr. Ellis and Mr. Canning.

'*To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq.*

'MY DEAR MORRITT—I received your kind letter a week or two ago. The little interlude of the bantling at Rokeby reminds me of a lady whose mother happened to produce her upon very short notice, between the hands of a game at whist, and who, from a joke of the celebrated David Hume, who was one of the players, lived long distinguished by the name of *The Parenthesis*. My wife had once nearly made a similar blunder in very awkward circumstances. We were invited to dine at Melville Castle (to which we were then near neighbours), with the Chief Baron[1] and his lady, its temporary inhabitants, —when behold, the Obadiah whom I despatched two hours before dinner from our cottage to summon the Dr. Slop of Edinburgh, halting at Melville Lodge to rest his wearied horse, make apologies, and so forth, encountered the Melville Castle Obadiah sallying on the identical errand, for the identical man of skill, who, like an active knight-errant, relieved the two distressed dames within three hours of each other. A blessed duet they would have made if they had put off their crying bout, as it is called, till they could do it in concert.

'And now, I have a grand project to tell you of.

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[1] The late Right Honourable Robert Dundas, Chief Baron of the Scotch Court of Exchequer.

Nothing less than a fourth romance, in verse; the theme, during the English civil wars of Charles I., and the scene, your own domain of Rokeby. I want to build my cottage a little better than my limited finances will permit out of my ordinary income; and although it is very true that an author should not hazard his reputation, yet, as Bob Acres says, I really think Reputation should take some care of the gentleman in return. Now, I have all your scenery deeply imprinted in my memory, and moreover, be it known to you, I intend to refresh its traces this ensuing summer, and to go as far as the borders of Lancashire, and the caves of Yorkshire, and so perhaps on to Derbyshire. I have sketched a story which pleases me, and I am only anxious to keep my theme quiet, for its being piddled upon by some of your *Ready-to-catch* literati, as John Bunyan calls them, would be a serious misfortune to me. I am not without hope of seducing you to be my guide a little way on my tour. Is there not some book (sense or nonsense, I care not) on the beauties of Teesdale —I mean a descriptive work? If you can point it out or lend it me, you will do me a great favour, and no less if you can tell me any traditions of the period. By which party was Barnard Castle occupied? It strikes me that it should be held for the Parliament. Pray, help me in this, by truth, or fiction, or tradition,—I care not which, if it be picturesque. What the deuce is the name of that wild glen where we had such a clamber on horseback up a stone staircase?—Cat's Cradle, or Cat's Castle, I think it was. I wish also to have the true edition of the traditionary tragedy of your old house at Mortham, and the ghost thereunto appertaining, and you will do me yeoman's service in compiling the relics of so valuable a legend. Item—Do you know anything of a striking ancient castle belonging, I think, to the Duke of Leeds, called Coningsburgh?[1] Grose notices it, but in a very flimsy manner. I once flew past it on the mail-coach, when its round tower and flying buttresses had a most romantic effect in the morning dawn.

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[1] See note, Ivanhoe, Waverley Novels, vol. xvii. pp. 335-339.

'The Quarterly is beyond my praise, and as much beyond me as I was beyond that of my poor old nurse who died the other day. Sir John Sinclair has gotten the golden fleece at last. Dogberry would not desire a richer reward for having been written down an ass. £6000 a year![1] Good faith, the whole reviews in Britain should rail at me, with my free consent, better cheap by at least a cypher. There is no chance, with all my engagements, to be at London this spring. My little boy Walter is ill with the measles, and I expect the rest to catch the disorder, which appears, thank God, very mild. Mrs. Scott joins in kindest compliments to Mrs. Morritt,—many merry Christmases to you—and believe me, truly yours,

'WALTER SCOTT.'

I insert Mr. Morritt's answer, both for the light which it throws on various particular passages in the poem as we have it, and because it shows that some of those features in the general plan, which were censured by the professional critics, had been early and strongly recommended to the poet's consideration by the person whom, on this occasion, he was most anxious to please.

'*To Walter Scott, Esq.*

'ROKEBY, 28*th December* 1811.

'MY DEAR SCOTT—I begin at the top of my paper, because your request must be complied with, and I foresee that a letter on the antiquities of Teesdale will not be a short one. Your project delights me much, and I willingly contribute my mite to its completion. Yet, highly as I approve of the scene where you lay the events of your romance, I have, I think, some observations to make as to the period you have chosen for it. Of this, however, you will be a better judge after I have detailed my antiquarian researches.—Now, as to Barnard Castle, it was built in Henry I.'s time, by Barnard, son of Guy Baliol, who landed with the Conqueror. It remained with the Baliols till their attainder by Edward I. The tomb of Alan of Galloway was here in Leland's time; and he gives the inscription. Alan, if you remember, married Margaret of Huntingdon, David's daughter, and was father, by her, of Devorgild, who married John Baliol, and from whom her son, John Baliol, claimed the crown of Scotland. Edward I. granted the castle and liberties to Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick; it descended (with that title) to the Nevills, and by Ann Nevill to Richard Duke of Gloucester, afterwards King Richard III. It does not appear to whom Henry VII. or his son re-granted it, but it fell soon into the hands of the Nevills, Earls of Westmoreland, by whom it was forfeited in the Rising of the North. It was granted by James I. to the citizens of London, from whom Sir Henry Vane received it by purchase. It does not seem ever to have been used as a place of strength after the Rising of the North; and when the Vanes bought it of the citizens, it was probably in a dismantled state. It was, however, a possession of the Vanes before the Civil Wars, and, therefore, with a safe conscience you may swear it stood for the Parliament. The lady for whose ghost you enquire at Rokeby, has been so buried in uncertainty, you may make what you like of her. The most interesting fiction makes her the heiress of the Rokebys, murdered in the woods of the Greta by a greedy collateral who inherited the estate. She reached the house before she expired, and her blood was extant in my younger days at Mortham tower. Others say it was a Lady Rokeby, the wife of the owner, who was shot in the walks by robbers; but she certainly became a ghost, and, under the very poetic *nom de guerre* of Mortham Dobby, she appeared dressed as a fine lady, with a piece of white silk trailing behind her — without a head, indeed (though no tradition states how she lost so material a member), but with many of its advantages, for she had long hair on her shoulders—and eyes, nose, and mouth, in her breast. The parson once, by talking Latin to her, confined her under the bridge that crosses the Greta at my dairy, but the arch being destroyed by floods in 1771, became incapable of containing a ghost any longer, and she was seen after that time by some of the older parishioners. I often heard of her in my early youth, from a sibyl who lived in the park to the age of 105, but since her death I believe the history has become obsolete.

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[1] Shortly after the appearance of the article alluded to, Sir John Sinclair was appointed cashier of Excise for Scotland. 'It should be added,' says his biographer, 'that the emoluments of the situation were greatly reduced at the death of Sir James Grant, his predecessor.'

'The Rokebys were at all times loyal, at least from Henry IV. downward. They lived early at Mortham tower, which was, I believe, a better building than the tower of Rokeby, for here also was one where my house now stands. I fancy they got Mortham by marriage.[1] Colonel Rokeby, the last possessor of the old blood, was ruined in the Civil Wars by his loyalty and unthriftiness, and the estates were bought by the Robinsons, one of whom, the *long* Sir Thomas Robinson, so well known and well quizzed in the time of our grandfathers, after laying out most of the estate on this place, sold the place and the estate together to my father in 1769. Oliver Cromwell paid a visit to Barnard Castle in his way from Scotland, October 1648. He does not seem to have been in the castle, but lodged in the town, whence I conclude the castle was then uninhabitable. Now I would submit to you whether, considering the course of events, it would not be expedient to lay the time of your romance as early as the war of the Roses. For, 1*st*, As you seem to hint that there will be a ghost or two in it, like the King of Bohemia's giants, they will be "more out of the way." 2*nd*, Barnard Castle, at the time I propose, belonged to Nevills and Plantagenets, of whom something advantageous (according to your cavalier views) may be brought forward; whereas, a short time before the Civil Wars of the Parliament, the Vanes became possessors, and still remain so; of whom, if any Tory bard should be able to say anything obliging, it will certainly be "*insigne, recens, adhuc indictum ore alio*," and do honour to his powers of imagination. *3rd*, The knights of Rokeby itself were of high rank and fair domain at the earlier period, and were ruining themselves ignobly at the other. *4th*, Civil war for civil war: the first had two poetical sides, and the last only one; for the Roundheads, though I always thought them politically right, were sad materials for poetry; even Milton cannot make much of them. I think no time suits so well with a romance, of which the scene lies in this country, as the Wars of the two Roses—unless you sing the rising of the North; and then you will abuse Queen Elizabeth, and be censured as an abettor of Popery. How you would be involved in political controversy—with all our Whigs, who are anti-Stuarts; and all our Tories, who are anti-Papistical! I therefore see no alternative but boldly to venture back to the days of the holy King Harry; for, God knows, it is difficult to say anything civil of us since that period. Consider only, did not Cromwell himself pray that the Lord would deliver him from Sir Harry Vane? and what will you do with him?—still more, if you take into the account the improvements in and about the castle to which yourself was witness when we visited it together?[1]

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[1] The heiress of Mortham married Rokeby in the reign of Edward II.; and his own castle at Rokeby having been destroyed by the Scotch after the battle of Bannockburn, he built one on his wife's estate—the same of which considerable remains still exist—on the northern bank of the Greta.

'There is a book of a few pages, describing the rides through and about Teesdale; I have it not, but if I can get it I will send it. It is very bare of information, but gives names. If you can get the third volume of Hutchinson's History of Durham, it would give you some useful bits of information, though very ill written. The glen where we clambered up to Cat-castle is itself called Deepdale. I fear we have few traditions that have survived the change of farms, and property of all sorts, which has long taken place in this neighbourhood. But we have some poetical names remaining, of which we none of us know the antiquity, or at least the origin. Thus, in the scamper we took from Deepdale and Cat-castle, we rode next, if you remember, to Cotherstone, an ancient village of the Fitzhughs on the Tees, whence I showed you a rock rising over the crown of the wood, still called Pendragon Castle. The river that joins the Tees at Cotherstone is yclept the Balder, I fancy in honour of the son of Odin; for the farm contiguous to it retains the name of Woden's Croft. The parish in which it stands is Romaldkirk, the church of St. Romald the hermit, and was once a hermitage itself in Teesdale forest. The parish next to Rokeby, on the Tees below my house, is Wycliff, where the old reformer was born, and the day-star of the Reformation first rose on England.

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[1] Mr. Morritt alludes to the mutilation of a curious vaulted roof of extreme antiquity, in the great tower of Barnard Castle, occasioned by its conversion into a manufactory of patent shot;—an *improvement* at which the Poet had expressed some indignation.

'The family of Rokeby, who were the proprietors of this place, were valiant and knightly. They seem to have had good possessions at the Conquest (see Doomsday Book); in Henry III.'s reign they were Sheriffs of Yorkshire. In Edward II.'s reign, Froissart informs us that when the Scotch army decamped in the night so ingeniously from Weardale that nobody knew the direction of their march, a hue and cry was raised after them, and a reward of a hundred merks annual value in land was offered by the Crown for whoever could discover them, and that de Rokeby—I think Sir Ralph—was the fortunate knight who ascertained their quarters on the moors near Hexham. In the time of Henry IV., the High-Sheriff of Yorkshire, who overthrew Northumberland and drove him to Scotland after the battle at Shrewsbury, was also a Rokeby. Tradition says that this sheriff was before this an adherent of the Percys, and was the identical knight who dissuaded Hotspur from the enterprise, on whose letter the angry warrior comments so freely in Shakspeare. They are indeed, I think, mentioned as adherents of the Percys in Chevy Chase, and fought under their banner; I hope, therefore, that they broke that connexion from pure patriotism, and not for filthy lucre.

'Such are all the annals that occur to me at present. If you will come here, we can summon a synod of the oldest women in the country, and you shall cross-examine them as much as you please. There are many romantic spots, and old names rather than remains of peels, and towers, once called castles, which belonged to Scroops, Fitzhughs, and Nevills, with which you should be intimate before you finish your poem,—and also the abbots and monks of Egglestone, who were old and venerable people, if you carry your story back into Romish times; and you will allow that the beauty of the situation deserves it, if you recollect the view from and near the bridge between me and Barnard Castle. Coningsburgh Castle, a noble building as you say, stands between Doncaster and Rotherham. I think it belongs to Lord Fitzwilliam, but am not sure. You may easily find the account of it in Grose, or any of the other antiquarians. The building is a noble circular tower, buttressed all round, and with walls of immoderate thickness. It is of a very early era, but I do not know its date.

'I have almost filled my letter with antiquarianism; but will not conclude without repeating how much your intention has charmed us. The scenery of our rivers deserves to become classic ground, and I hope the scheme will induce you to visit and revisit it often. I will contrive to ride with you to Wenslydale and the Caves at least, and the border of Lancashire, etc. if I can; and to facilitate that trip, I hope you will bring Mrs. Scott here, that our dames may not be impatient of our absence. "I know each dale, and every alley green," between Rokeby and the Lakes and Caves, and have no scruple in recommending my own guidance, under which you will be far more likely to make discoveries than by yourself; for the people have many of them no knowledge of their own country. Should I, in consequence of your celebrity, be obliged to leave Rokeby from the influx of cockney romancers, artists, illustrators, and sentimental tourists, I shall retreat to Ashestiel, or to your new cottage, and thus visit on you the sins of your writings. At all events, however, I shall raise the rent of my inn at Greta Bridge on the first notice of your book, as I hear the people at Callander have made a fortune by you. Pray give our kindest and best regards to Mrs. Scott, and believe me ever, dear Scott, yours very truly,

'J. B. S. MORRITT.'

In January 1812, Scott entered upon the enjoyment of his proper salary as a Clerk of Session, which, with his sheriffdom, gave him from this time till very near the close of his life, a professional income of £1600 a year. On the 11th of the same month he lost his kind friend and first patron, Henry, third Duke of Buccleuch, and fifth of Queensberry. Both these events are mentioned in the following letter to Joanna Baillie, who, among other things, had told Scott that the materials for his purse were now on her table, and expressed her anxiety to know who was the author of some beautiful lines on the recent death of their friend, James Grahame, the poet of the Sabbath. These verses had, it appears, found their way anonymously into the newspapers.

To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.

'*January 17th*, 1812.

'MY DEAR FRIEND—The promise of the purse has flattered my imagination so very agreeably, that I cannot help sending you an ancient silver mouth-piece, to which, if it pleases your taste, you may adapt your intended labours: this, besides, is a genteel way of tying you down to your promise; and to bribe you still farther, I assure you it shall not be put to the purpose of holding bank-notes or vulgar bullion, but reserved as a place of deposit for some of my pretty little medals and nick-nackatories. When I do make another poetical effort, I shall certainly expect the sum you mention from the booksellers, for they have had too good bargains of me hitherto, and I fear I shall want a great deal of money to make my cottage exactly what I should like it. Meanwhile, between ourselves, my income has been very much increased since I wrote to you, in a different way. My predecessor in the office of Clerk of Session retired to make room for me, on the amiable condition of retaining all the emoluments during his life, which, from my wish to retire from the Bar and secure a certain though distant income, I was induced to consent to; and considering his advanced age and uncertain health, the bargain was really not a bad one. But alas! like Sinbad's old man of the sea, my coadjutor's strength increased prodigiously after he had fairly settled himself on my shoulders, so that after five years' gratuitous labour I began to tire of my burden. Fortunately, Mr. Bankes' late superannuation act provides a rateable pension for office-holders obliged to retire after long and faithful services; and my old friend very handsomely consented to be transferred from my galled shoulders to the broad back of the public, although he is likely to sustain a considerable diminution of income by the exchange, to which he has declared himself willing to submit as a penalty for having lived longer than he or I expected. To me it will make a difference of £1300 a year, no trifle to us who have no wish to increase our expense in a single particular, and who could support it on our former income without inconvenience. This I tell you in confidence, because I know you will be very well pleased with any good fortune which comes in my way.—Everybody who cares a farthing for poetry is delighted with your volume, and well they may. You will neither be shocked nor surprised at hearing that Mr. Jeffrey has announced himself of a contrary opinion. So, at least, I understand, for our very ideas of what is poetry differ so widely, that we rarely talk upon these subjects. There is something in his mode of reasoning that leads me greatly to doubt whether, notwithstanding the vivacity of his imagination, he really has any *feeling* of poetical genius, or whether he has worn it all off by perpetually sharpening his wit on the grindstone of criticism.

'I am very glad that you met my dear friend, George Ellis,—a wonderful man, who, through the life of a statesman and politician, conversing with princes, wits, fine ladies, and fine gentlemen, and acquainted with all the intrigues and tracasseries of the cabinets and *ruelles* of foreign courts, has yet retained all warm and kindly feelings which render a man amiable in society, and the darling of his friends.

'The author of the elegy upon poor Grahame is John Wilson, a young man of very considerable poetical powers. He is now engaged in a poem called the *Isle of Palms*, something in the style of Southey. He is an eccentric genius, and has fixed himself upon the banks of Windermere, but occasionally resides in Edinburgh, where he now is. Perhaps you have seen him;—his father was a wealthy Paisley manufacturer—his mother a sister of Robert Sym. He seems an excellent, warm-hearted, and enthusiastic young man; something too much, perhaps, of the latter quality, places him among the list of originals.

'Our streets in Edinburgh are become as insecure as your houses in Wapping. Only think of a formal association among nearly fifty apprentices, aged from twelve to twenty, to scour the streets and knock down and rob all whom they found in their way. This they executed on the last night of the year with such spirit, that two men have died, and several others are dangerously ill, from the wanton treatment they received. The watchword of these young heroes when they met with resistance was—*Mar him*, a word of dire import; and which, as they were all armed with bludgeons loaded with lead, and were very savage, they certainly used in the sense of Ratcliffe Highway. The worst of all this is not so much the immediate evil, which a severe example[1] will probably check for the present, as that the formation and existence of such an association, holding regular meetings and keeping regular minutes, argues a woeful negligence in the masters of these boys, the tradesmen and citizens of Edinburgh, of that wholesome domestic discipline which they ought, in justice to God and to man, to exercise over the youth intrusted to their charge; a negligence which cannot fail to be productive of every sort of vice, crime, and folly, among boys of that age.

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[1] Three of these lads, all under eighteen years of age, were executed on the scene of one of the murders here alluded to, April the 22nd, 1812. Their youth and penitence excited the deepest compassion; but never certainly was a severe example more necessary.

'Yesterday I had the melancholy task of attending the funeral of the good old Duke of Buccleuch. It was, by his own direction, very private; but scarce a dry eye among the assistants—a rare tribute to a person whose high rank and large possessions removed him so far out of the social sphere of private friendship. But the Duke's mind was moulded upon the kindliest and most single-hearted model, and arrested the affections of all who had any connexion with him. He is truly a great loss to Scotland, and will be long missed and lamented, though the successor to his rank is heir also to his generous spirit and affections. He was my kind friend.—Ever yours,

'W. Scott.'

The next of his letters to Joanna Baillie is curious, as giving his first impressions on reading Childe Harold. It contains also a striking sketch of the feelings he throughout life expressed, as to what he had observed of society in London—with a not less characteristic display of some of his own minor amusements.

'*To Miss Joanna Baillie.*

'Ashestiel, *April 4th*, 1812.

'I ought not, even in modern gratitude, which may be moved by the gift of a purse, much less in minstrel sympathy, which values it more as your work than if it were stuffed with guineas, to have delayed thanking you, my kind friend, for such an elegant and acceptable token of your regard. My kindest and best thanks also attend the young lady who would not permit the purse to travel untenanted.[1] I shall be truly glad when I can offer them in person, but of that there is no speedy prospect. I don't believe I shall see London this great while again, which I do not very much regret, were it not that it postpones the pleasure of seeing you and about half-a-dozen other friends. Without having any of the cant of loving retirement, and solitude, and rural pleasures, and so forth, I really have no great pleasure in the general society of London; I have never been there long enough to attempt anything like living in my own way, and the immense length of the streets separates the objects you are interested in so widely from each other, that three parts of your time are passed in endeavouring to dispose of the fourth to some advantage. At Edinburgh, although in general society we are absolute mimics of London, and imitate them equally in late hours, and in the strange precipitation with which we hurry from one place to another, in search of the society which we never sit still to enjoy, yet still people may manage their own parties and motions their own way. But all this is limited to my own particular circumstances,—for in a city like London, the constant resident has beyond all other places the power of conducting himself exactly as he likes. Whether this is entirely to be wished or not, may indeed be doubted. I have seldom felt myself so fastidious about books as in the midst of a large library, where one is naturally tempted to imitate the egregious epicure who condescended to take only one bite out of the sunny side of a peach. I suspect something of scarcity is necessary to make you devour the intellectual banquet with a good relish and digestion, as we know to be the case with respect to corporeal sustenance. But to quit all this egotism, which is as little as possible to the purpose, you must be informed that Erskine has enshrined your letter among his household papers of the most precious kind. Among your thousand admirers you have not a warmer or more kindly heart; he tells me Jeffrey talks very favourably of this volume. I should be glad, for his own sake, that he took some opportunity to retrace the paths of his criticism; but after pledging himself so deeply as he has done, I doubt much his giving way even unto conviction. As to my own share, I am labouring sure enough, but I have not yet got on the right path where I can satisfy myself I shall go on with courage, for diffidence does not easily beset me—and the public, still more than the ladies, " stoop to the forward and the bold" ; but then in either case, I fancy, the suitor for favour must be buoyed up by some sense of deserving it, whether real or supposed. The celebrated apology of Dryden for a passage which he could not defend, " that he knew when he wrote it, it was bad enough to succeed," was, with all deference to his memory, certainly invented to justify the fact after it was committed.

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[1] The purse contained an old coin from Joanna Baillie's nie
daughter of the Doctor.

'Have you seen the Pilgrimage of Childe Harold, by Lord Byron? It is, I think, a very clever poem, but gives no good symptom of the writer's heart or morals; his hero, notwithstanding the affected antiquity of the style in some parts, is a modern man of fashion and fortune, worn out and satiated with the pursuits of dissipation, and although there is a caution against it in the preface, you cannot for your soul avoid concluding that the author, as he gives an account of his own travels, is also doing so in his own character. Now really this is too bad; vice ought to be a little more modest, and it must require impudence at least equal to the noble Lord's other powers, to claim sympathy gravely for the ennui arising from his being tired of his wassailers and his paramours. There is a monstrous deal of conceit in it too, for it is informing the inferior part of the world that their little old-fashioned scruples of limitation are not worthy of his regard, while his fortune and possessions are such as have put all sorts of gratifications too much in his power to afford him any pleasure. Yet with all this conceit and assurance, there is much poetical merit in the book, and I wish you would read it.

'I *have* got Rob Roy's gun, a long Spanish-barrelled piece, with his initials, R. M. C., for Robert Macgregor Campbell, which latter name he assumed in compliment to the Argyle family, who afforded him a good deal of private support, because he was a thorn in the side of their old rival house of Montrose. I have, moreover, a relic of a more heroic character; it is a sword which was given to the great Marquis of Montrose by Charles I., and appears to have belonged to his father, our gentle King Jamie. It had been preserved for a long time at Gartmore, but the present proprietor was selling his library, or great part of it, and John Ballantyne, the purchaser, wishing to oblige me, would not conclude a bargain, which the gentleman's necessity made him anxious about, till he flung the sword into the scale; it is, independent of its other merits, a most beautiful blade. I think a dialogue between this same sword and Rob Roy's gun might be composed with good effect.

'We are here in a most extraordinary pickle—considering that we have just entered upon April, when, according to the poet, "primroses paint the sweet plain,"[1] instead of which, both hill and valley are doing penance in a sheet of snow of very respectable depth. Mail-coaches have been stopt—shepherds, I grieve to say, lost in the snow; in short, we experience all the hardships of a January storm at this late period of the spring; the snow has been near a fortnight, and if it departs with dry weather, we may do well enough, but if wet weather should ensue, the wheat crop through Scotland will be totally lost.—My thoughts are anxiously turned to the Peninsula, though I think the Spaniards have but one choice, and that is to choose Lord Wellington dictator; I have no doubt he could put things right yet. As for domestic politics, I really give them very little consideration. Your friends, the Whigs, are angry enough, I suppose, with the Prince Regent, but those who were most apt to flatter his follies, have little reason to complain of the usage they have met with—and he may probably think that those who were true to the father in his hour of calamity, may have the best title to the confidence of the son. The excellent private character of the old King gave him great advantages as the head of a free government. I fear the Prince will long experience the inconveniences of not having attended to his own.—Mrs. Siddons, as fame reports, has taken another engagement at Covent Garden: surely she is wrong ; she should have no twilight, but set in the full possession of her powers.[1]

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[1] Allan Ramsay's song of 'The Yellow-hair'd Laddie.'

'I hope Campbell's plan of lectures will answer.[2] I think the brogue may be got over, if he will not trouble himself by attempting to correct it, but read with fire and feeling ; he is an animated reciter, but I never heard him read.

'I have a great mind, before sealing this long scrawl, to send you a list of the contents of the purse as they at present stand :—

'*1st*, Miss Elizabeth Baillie's purse-penny, called by the learned a denarius of the Empress Faustina.

'*2nd*, A gold brooch, found in a bog in Ireland, which, for aught I know, fastened the mantle of an Irish Princess in the days of Cuthullin, or Neal of the Nine Hostages.

'*3rd*, A toadstone—a celebrated amulet, which was never lent to any one unless upon a bond for a thousand merks for its being safely restored. It was sovereign for protecting new-born children and their mothers from the power of the fairies, and has been repeatedly borrowed from my mother, on account of this virtue.

'*4th*, A coin of Edward I., found in Dryburgh Abbey.

'*5th*, A funeral ring, with Dean Swift's hair.

'So you see my nick-nackatory is well supplied, though the purse is more valuable than all its contents.

'Adieu, my dear friend. Mrs. Scott joins in kind respects to your sister, the Doctor, and Mrs. Baillie.

'WALTER SCOTT.'

A month later, the Edinburgh Review on Lord Byron's Romaunt having just appeared, Scott says to Mr. Morritt (May 12)—'I agree very much in what you say of Childe

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[1] Mrs. Siddons made her farewell appearance at Covent Garden, as Lady Macbeth, on the 29th of June 1812 ; but she afterwards resumed her profession for short intervals more than once, and did not finally bid adieu to the stage until the 9th of June 1819.

[2] Mr. Thomas Campbell had announced his first course of Lectures on English Poetry about this time.

Harold. Though there is something provoking and insulting to morality and to feeling in his misanthropical ennui, it gives, nevertheless, an odd piquancy to his descriptions and reflections. This is upon the whole a piece of most extraordinary power, and may rank its author with our first poets. I see the Edinburgh Review has hauled its wind.'

Lord Byron was, I need not say, the prime object of interest this season in the fashionable world of London; nor did the Prince Regent owe the subsequent hostilities of the noble Poet to any neglect on his part of the brilliant genius which had just been fully revealed in the Childe Harold. Mr. Murray, the publisher of the Romaunt, on hearing, on the 29th of June, Lord Byron's account of his introduction to his Royal Highness, conceived that, by communicating it to Scott, he might afford the opportunity of such a personal explanation between his two poetical friends, as should obliterate on both sides whatever painful feelings had survived the offensive allusions to Marmion in the English Bards and Scotch Reviewers; and this good-natured step had the desired consequences. Mr. Moore says that the correspondence 'begun in some enquiries which Mr. Scott addressed to Lord Byron on the subject of his interview with Royalty';[1] but he would not have used that expression had he seen the following letter:—

'*To the Right Honourable Lord Byron, etc. etc.*
Care of John Murray, Esq., Fleet Street, London.

'EDINBURGH, *July 3rd*, 1812.

'MY LORD—I am uncertain if I ought to profit by the apology which is afforded me, by a very obliging communication from our acquaintance, John Murray of Fleet Street, to give your Lordship the present trouble. But my intrusion concerns a large debt of gratitude due to your Lordship, and a much less important one of explanation, which I think I owe to myself, as I dislike standing low in the opinion of any person whose talents rank so highly in my own, as your Lordship's most deservedly do.

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[1] Life and Works of Lord Byron, vol. ii. p. 155.

'The first *count*, as our technical language expresses it, relates to the high pleasure I have received from the Pilgrimage of Childe Harold, and from its precursors; the former, with all its classical associations, some of which are lost on so poor a scholar as I am, possesses the additional charm of vivid and animated description, mingled with original sentiment;—but besides this debt, which I owe your Lordship in common with the rest of the reading public, I have to acknowledge my particular thanks for your having distinguished by praise, in the work which your Lordship rather dedicated in general to satire, some of my own literary attempts. And this leads me to put your Lordship right in the circumstances respecting the sale of Marmion, which had reached you in a distorted and misrepresented form, and which, perhaps, I have some reason to complain, were given to the public without more particular enquiry. The poem, my Lord, was *not* written upon contract for a sum of money—though it is too true that it was sold and published in a very unfinished state (which I have since regretted), to enable me to extricate myself from some engagements which fell suddenly upon me, by the unexpected misfortunes of a very near relation. So that, to quote statute and precedent, I really come under the case cited by Juvenal, though not quite in the extremity of the classic author—

> Esurit, intactam Paridi nisi vendit Agaven.

And so much for a mistake, into which your Lordship might easily fall, especially as I generally find it the easiest way of stopping sentimental compliments on the beauty, etc. of certain poetry, and the delights which the author must have taken in the composition, by assigning the readiest reason that will cut the discourse short, upon a subject where one must appear either conceited, or affectedly rude and cynical.

'As for my attachment to literature, I sacrificed for the pleasure of pursuing it very fair chances of opulence and professional honours, at a time of life when I fully knew their value; and I am not ashamed to say, that in deriving advantages in compensation from the partial favour of the public, I have added some comforts and elegancies to a bare independence. I am sure your Lordship's good sense will easily put this unimportant egotism to the right account, for—though I do not know the motive would make me enter into controversy with a fair or an *unfair* literary critic—I may be well excused for a wish to clear my personal character from any tinge of mercenary or sordid feeling in the eyes of a contemporary of genius. Your Lordship will likewise permit me to add, that you would have escaped the trouble of this explanation, had I not understood that the satire alluded to had been suppressed, not to be reprinted. For in removing a prejudice on your Lordship's own mind, I had no intention of making any appeal by or through you to the public, since my own habits of life have rendered my defence as to avarice or rapacity rather too easy.

'Leaving this foolish matter where it lies, I have to request your Lordship's acceptance of my best thanks for the flattering communication which you took the trouble to make Mr. Murray on my behalf, and which could not fail to give me the gratification which I am sure you intended. I daresay our worthy bibliopolist overcoloured his report of your Lordship's conversation with the Prince Regent, but I owe my thanks to him nevertheless, for the excuse he has given me for intruding these pages on your Lordship. Wishing you health, spirit, and perseverance, to continue your pilgrimage through the interesting countries which you have still to pass with Childe Harold, I have the honour to be, my Lord, your Lordship's obedient servant,

'WALTER SCOTT.'

'*P.S.*—Will your Lordship permit me a verbal criticism on Childe Harold, were it only to show I have read his Pilgrimage with attention? "Nuestra Dama de la Pena" means, I suspect, not our Lady of Crime or Punishment, but our Lady of the Cliff, the difference is, I believe, merely in the accentuation of "peña."'

Lord Byron's answer was in these terms :—

'*To Walter Scott, Esq., Edinburgh.*

'ST. JAMES'S STREET, *July* 6, 1812.

'SIR—I have just been honoured with your letter.—I feel sorry that you should have thought it worth while to notice the evil works of my nonage, as the thing is suppressed *voluntarily*, and your explanation is too kind not to give me pain. The Satire was written when I was very young and very angry, and fully bent on displaying my wrath and my wit, and now I am haunted by the ghosts of my wholesale assertions. I cannot sufficiently thank you for your praise ; and now, waiving myself, let me talk to you of the Prince Regent. He ordered me to be presented to him at a ball : and after some sayings, peculiarly pleasing from royal lips, as to my own attempts, he talked to me of you and your immortalities ; he preferred you to every bard past and present, and asked which of your works pleased me most. It was a difficult question. I answered, I thought the Lay. He said his own opinion was nearly similar. In speaking of the others, I told him that I thought you more particularly the poet of *Princes*, as *they* never appeared more fascinating than in Marmion and the Lady of the Lake. He was pleased to coincide, and to dwell on the description of your Jameses as no less royal than poetical. He spoke alternately of Homer and yourself, and seemed well acquainted with both ; so that (with the exception of the Turks[1] and your humble servant) you were in very good company. I defy Murray to have exaggerated his Royal Highness's opinion of your powers, nor can I pretend to enumerate all he said on the subject ; but it may give you pleasure to hear that it was conveyed in language which would only suffer by my attempting to transcribe it; and with a tone and taste which gave me a very high idea of his abilities and accomplishments, which I had hitherto considered as confined to *manners*, certainly superior to those of any living *gentleman*.

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[1] A Turkish ambassador and his suite figured at the ball.

'This interview was accidental. I never went to the levee; for having seen the courts of Mussulman and Catholic sovereigns, my curiosity was sufficiently allayed: and my politics being as perverse as my rhymes, I had, in fact, no business there. To be thus praised by your Sovereign must be gratifying to you; and if that gratification is not alloyed by the communication being made through me, the bearer of it will consider himself very fortunately, and sincerely, your obliged and obedient servant, BYRON.'

'*P.S.*—Excuse this scrawl, scratched in a great hurry, and just after a journey.'

Scott immediately replied as follows:—

'*To the Right Hon. Lord Byron, etc. etc. etc.*

'ABBOTSFORD NEAR MELROSE, *16th July* 1812.

'MY LORD—I am much indebted to your Lordship for your kind and friendly letter: and much gratified by the Prince Regent's good opinion of my literary attempts. I know so little of courts or princes, that any success I may have had in hitting off the Stuarts is, I am afraid, owing to a little old Jacobite leaven which I sucked in with the numerous traditionary tales that amused my infancy. It is a fortunate thing for the Prince himself that he has a literary turn, since nothing can so effectually relieve the ennui of state, and the anxieties of power.

'I hope your Lordship intends to give us more of Childe Harold. I was delighted that my friend Jeffrey—for such, in despite of many a feud, literary and political, I always esteem him—has made so handsomely the *amende honorable* for not having discovered in the bud the merits of the flower; and I am happy to understand that the retractation so handsomely made was received with equal liberality. These circumstances may perhaps some day lead you to revisit Scotland, which has a maternal claim upon you, and I need not say what pleasure I should have in returning my personal thanks for the honour you have done me. I am labouring here to contradict an old proverb, and make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, namely, to convert a bare *haugh* and *brae*, of about 100 acres, into a comfortable farm. Now, although I am living in a gardener's hut, and although the adjacent ruins of Melrose have little to tempt one who has seen those of Athens, yet, should you take a tour which is so fashionable at this season, I should be very happy to have an opportunity of introducing you to anything remarkable in my fatherland. My neighbour, Lord Somerville, would, I am sure, readily supply the accommodations which I want, unless you prefer a couch in a closet, which is the utmost hospitality I have at present to offer. The fair, or shall I say the sage, Apreece that was, Lady Davy that is, is soon to show us how much science she leads captive in Sir Humphrey; so your Lordship sees, as the citizen's wife says in the farce —"Threadneedle Street has some charms," since they procure us such celebrated visitants. As for me, I would rather cross-question your Lordship about the outside of Parnassus, than learn the nature of the contents of all the other mountains in the world. Pray, when under "its cloudy canopy" did you hear anything of the celebrated Pegasus? Some say he has been brought off with other curiosities to Britain, and now covers at Tattersall's. I would fain have a cross from him out of my little moss-trooper's Galloway, and I think your Lordship can tell me how to set about it, as I recognise his true paces in the high-mettled description of Ali Pacha's military court.

'A wise man said—or, if not, I, who am no wise man, now say—that there is no surer mark of regard than when your correspondent ventures to write nonsense to you. Having, therefore, like Dogberry, bestowed all my tediousness upon your Lordship, you are to conclude that I have given you a convincing proof that I am very much your Lordship's obliged and very faithful servant,

'WALTER SCOTT.'

From this time the epistolary intercourse between Scott and Byron continued to be kept up; and it erelong assumed a tone of friendly confidence equally honourable to both these great competitors, without rivalry, for the favour of the literary world.

The date of the letter last quoted immediately preceded that of Scott's second meeting with another of the most illustrious of his contemporaries. He had met Davy at Mr. Wordsworth's when in the first flush of his celebrity in 1804, and been, as one of his letters states, much delighted with the simple and unaffected style of his bearing—the most agreeable characteristic of high genius.' Sir Humphrey, now at the summit of his fame, had come by his marriage with Scott's accomplished relation, into possession of an ample fortune; and he and his bride were among the first of the poet's visitants in the original cabin at Abbotsford.

The following letter is an answer to one in which Mr. Southey had besought Scott's good offices in behalf of an application which he thought of making to be apppointed Historiographer-Royal, in the room of Mr. Dutens, just dead. It will be seen that both poets regarded with much alarm the symptoms of popular discontent which appeared in various districts, particularly among the *Luddites*, as they were called, of Yorkshire, during the uncertain condition of public affairs consequent on the assassination of the Prime Minister, Mr. Percival, by Bellingham, in the lobby of the House of Commons, on the 11th of May 1812; and that Scott had, in his capacity of Sheriff, had his own share in suppressing the tumults of the only manufacturing town of Selkirkshire. The last sentence of the letter alludes to a hint dropped in the Edinburgh Review, that the author of the historical department of the Edinburgh Annual Register ought to be called to the bar of the House of Commons, in consequence of the bold language in which he had criticized the parliamentary hostility of the Whigs to the cause of Spain.

'*To Robert Southey, Esq., Keswick.*

'EDINBURGH, *4th June* 1812.

'MY DEAR SOUTHEY—It is scarcely necessary to say that the instant I had your letter I wrote to the only friend I have in power, Lord Melville (if indeed he be now in power), begging him for the sake of his own character, for the remembrance of his father who wished you sincerely well, and by every other objuration I could think of, to back your application. All I fear, if the Administration remain, is the influence of the clergy, who have a strange disposition to job away among themselves the rewards of literature. But I fear they are all to pieces above stairs, and much owing to rashness and mismanagement; for if they could not go on without Canning and Wellesley, they certainly should from the beginning have invited them in as companions, and not mere retainers. On the whole, that cursed compound of madness and villany has contrived to do his country more mischief at one blow than all her sages and statesmen will be able to repair perhaps in our day. You are quite right in apprehending a *Jacquerie;* the country is mined below our feet. Last week, learning that a meeting was to be held among the weavers of the large manufacturing village of Galashiels, for the purpose of cutting a man's web from his loom, I apprehended the ringleaders and disconcerted the whole project; but in the course of my enquiries, imagine my surprise at discovering a bundle of letters and printed manifestoes, from which it appeared that the Manchester Weavers' Committee corresponds with every manufacturing town in the South and West of Scotland, and levies a subsidy of 2s. 6d. per man—(an immense sum)—for the ostensible purpose of petitioning Parliament for redress of grievances, but doubtless to sustain them in their revolutionary movements. An energetic administration, which had the confidence of the country, would soon check all this; but it is our misfortune to lose the pilot when the ship is on the breakers. But it is sickening to think of our situation.

'I can hardly think there could have been any serious intention of taking the hint of the Review, and yet *liberty* has so often been made the pretext of crushing its own best supporters, that I am always prepared to expect the most tyrannical proceedings from professed demagogues.

'I am uncertain whether the Chamberlain will be liable to removal—if not, I should hope you may be pretty sure of your object.—Believe me ever yours faithfully,

'WALTER SCOTT.

'*4th June.*—What a different birthday from those I have seen! It is likely I shall go to Rokeby for a few days this summer; and if so, I will certainly diverge to spend a day at Keswick.'

Mr. Southey's application was unsuccessful—the office he wished for having been bestowed, as soon as it fell vacant, on a person certainly of vastly inferior literary pretensions—the late Rev. J. S. Clarke, D.D., private librarian to the Regent.

CHAPTER XXV

The 'Flitting' to Abbotsford—Plantations—George Thomson—Rokeby and Triermain in progress—Excursion to Flodden—Bishop-Auckland—and Rokeby Park—Correspondence with Crabbe—Life of Patrick Carey, etc.—Publication of Rokeby—and of the Bridal of Triermain.

1812–1813

TOWARDS the end of May 1812, the Sheriff finally removed from Ashestiel to Abbotsford. The day when this occurred was a sad one for many a poor neighbour—for they lost, both in him and his wife, very generous protectors. In such a place, among the few evils which counterbalance so many good things in the condition of the peasantry, the most afflicting is the want of access to medical advice. As far as their means and skill would go, they had both done their utmost to supply this want; and Mrs. Scott, in particular, had made it so much her business to visit the sick in their scattered cottages, and bestowed on them the contents of her medicine-chest as well as of the larder and cellar, with such unwearied kindness, that her name is never mentioned there to this day without some expression of tenderness. Scott's children remember the parting scene as one of unmixed affliction—but it had had, as we shall see, its lighter features.

Among the many amiable English friends whom he owed to his frequent visits at Rokeby Park, there was, I believe, none that had a higher place in his regard than the late Anne Lady Alvanley, the widow of the celebrated

Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas. He was fond of female society in general; but her ladyship was a woman after his heart; well born, and highly bred, but without the slightest tinge of the frivolities of modern fashion; soundly informed, and a warm lover of literature and the arts, but holding in as great horror as himself the imbecile chatter and affected ecstasies of the bluestocking generation. Her ladyship had written to him early in May, by Miss Sarah Smith (now Mrs. Bartley), whom I have already mentioned as one of his theatrical favourites; and his answer contains, among other matters, a sketch of the 'Forest Flitting.'

'*To the Right Honourable Lady Alvanley.*

'ASHESTIEL, 25*th May* 1812.

'I was honoured, my dear Lady Alvanley, by the kind letter which you sent me with our friend Miss Smith, whose talents are, I hope, receiving at Edinburgh the full meed of honourable applause which they so highly merit. It is very much against my will that I am forced to speak of them by report alone, for this being the term of removing, I am under the necessity of being at this farm to superintend the transference of my goods and chattels, a most miscellaneous collection, to a small property, about five miles down the Tweed, which I purchased last year. The neighbours have been much delighted with the procession of my furniture, in which old swords, bows, targets, and lances made a very conspicuous show. A family of turkeys was accommodated within the helmet of some *preux* chevalier of ancient Border fame; and the very cows, for aught I know, were bearing banners and muskets. I assure your ladyship that this caravan, attended by a dozen of ragged rosy peasant children, carrying fishing-rods and spears, and leading ponies, greyhounds, and spaniels, would, as it crossed the Tweed, have furnished no bad subject for the pencil, and really reminded me of one of the gypsy groups of Callot upon their march.

'EDINBURGH, 28*th May*.

'I have got here at length, and had the pleasure to hear Miss Smith speak the Ode on the Passions charmingly last night. It was her benefit, and the house was tolerable, though not so good as she deserves, being a very good girl, as well as an excellent performer.

'I have read Lord Byron with great pleasure, though pleasure is not quite the appropriate word. I should say admiration—mixed with regret, that the author should have adopted such an unamiable misanthropical tone.—The reconciliation with Holland-house is extremely edifying, and may teach young authors to be in no hurry to exercise their satirical vein. I remember an honest old Presbyterian, who thought it right to speak with respect even of the devil himself, since no one knew in what corner he might one day want a friend. But Lord Byron is young, and certainly has great genius, and has both time and capacity to make amends for his errors. I wonder if he will pardon the Edinburgh reviewers, who have read their recantation of their former strictures.

'Mrs. Scott begs to offer her kindest and most respectful compliments to your ladyship and the young ladies. I hope we shall get into Yorkshire this season to see Morritt: he and his lady are really delightful persons.—Believe me, with great respect, dear Lady Alvanley, your much honoured and obliged WALTER SCOTT.'

A week later, in answer to a letter, mentioning the approach of the celebrated sale of books in which the Roxburghe Club originated, Scott says to his trusty ally, Daniel Terry:—

'EDINBURGH, 9*th June* 1812.

'MY DEAR TERRY—I wish you joy of your success, which, although all reports state it as most highly flattering, does not exceed what I had hoped for you. I think I shall do you a sensible pleasure in requesting that you will take a walk over the fields to Hampstead one of these fine days, and deliver the enclosed to my friend Miss

Baillie, with whom, I flatter myself, you will be much pleased, as she has all the simplicity of real genius. I mentioned to her some time ago that I wished to make you acquainted, so that the sooner you can call upon her, the compliment will be the more gracious. As I suppose you will sometimes look in at the Roxburghe sale, a memorandum respecting any remarkable articles will be a great favour.

'Abbotsford was looking charming, when I was obliged to mount my wheel in this court, too fortunate that I have at length some share in the roast meat I am daily engaged in turning. Our flitting and removal from Ashestiel baffled all description; we had twenty-four cart-loads of the veriest trash in nature, besides dogs, pigs, ponies, poultry, cows, calves, bare-headed wenches, and bare-breeched boys. In other respects we are going on in the old way, only poor Percy is dead. I intend to have an old stone set up by his grave, with "*Cy gist li preux Percie*," and I hope future antiquaries will debate which hero of the house of Northumberland has left his bones in Teviotdale.[1]—Believe me yours very truly,

'WALTER SCOTT.'

This was one of the busiest summers of Scott's busy life. Till the 12th of July he was at his post in the Court of Session five days every week; but every Saturday evening found him at Abbotsford, to observe the progress his labourers had made within doors and without in his absence; and on Monday night he returned to Edinburgh. Even before the Summer Session commenced, he appears to have made some advance in his Rokeby, for he writes to Mr. Morritt, from Abbotsford, on the 4th of May—'As for the house and the poem, there are twelve masons hammering at the one, and one poor noddle at the other—so they are both in progress';—and his literary labours throughout the long vacation were continued under the same sort of disadvantage. That autumn he had, in fact, no room at all for himself. The only parlour which had been hammered into anything like habitable condition, served at once for dining-room, drawing-room, schoolroom, and study. A window looking to the river was kept sacred to his desk ; an old bed-curtain was nailed up across the room close behind his chair, and there, whenever the spade, the dibble, or the chisel (for he took his full share in all the work on hand) was laid aside, he pursued his poetical tasks, apparently undisturbed and unannoyed by the surrounding confusion of masons and carpenters, to say nothing of the lady's small talk, the children's babble among themselves, or their repetition of their lessons. The truth no doubt was, that when at his desk he did little more, as far as regarded *poetry*, than write down the lines which he had fashioned in his mind while pursuing his vocation as a planter, upon that bank which received originally, by way of joke, the title of *the thicket*. 'I am now,' he says to Ellis (Oct. 17), 'adorning a patch of naked land with trees *facturis nepotibus umbram*, for I shall never live to enjoy their shade myself otherwise than in the recumbent posture of Tityrus or Menalcas.' But he did live to see *the thicket* deserve not only that name, but a nobler one ; and to fell with his own hand many a well-grown tree that he had planted there.

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[1] The epitaph of this favourite greyhound may be seen on the edge of the bank, a little way below the house of Abbotsford.

Another plantation of the same date, by his eastern boundary, was less successful. For this he had asked and received from his early friend, the Marchioness of Stafford, a supply of acorns from Trentham, and it was named in consequence *Sutherland bower ;* but the field-mice, in the course of the ensuing winter, contrived to root up and devour the whole of her ladyship's goodly benefaction. A third space had been set apart, and duly enclosed, for the reception of some Spanish chestnuts offered to him by an admirer established in merchandise at Seville ; but that gentleman had not been a very knowing ally as to such matters, for when the chestnuts arrived, it turned out that they had been boiled.

Scott writes thus to Terry, in September, while the Roxburghe sale was still going on :—

'I have lacked your assistance, my dear sir, for twenty whimsicalities this autumn. Abbotsford, as you will readily conceive, has considerably changed its face since the auspices of Mother Retford were exchanged for ours. We have got up a good garden wall, complete stables in the haugh, according to Stark's plan, and the old farm yard being enclosed with a wall, with some little picturesque additions in front, has much relieved the stupendous height of the Doctor's barn. The new plantations have thriven amazingly well, the acorns are coming up fast, and Tom Purdie is the happiest and most consequential person in the world. My present work is building up the well with some *debris* from the Abbey. O for your assistance, for I am afraid we shall make but a botched job of it, especially as our materials are of a very miscellaneous complexion. The worst of all is, that while my trees grow and my fountain fills, my purse, in an inverse ratio, sinks to zero. This last circumstance will, I fear, make me a very poor guest at the literary entertainment your researches hold out for me. I should, however, like much to have the Treatise on Dreams, by the author of the New Jerusalem, which, as John Cuthbertson the smith said of the minister's sermon, must be neat work. The Loyal Poems by N. T.[1] are probably by poor Nahum Tate, who associated with Brady in versifying the Psalms, and more honourably with Dryden in the second part of Absalom and Achitophel. I never saw them, however, but would give a guinea or thirty shillings for the collection. Our friend John Ballantyne has, I learn, made a sudden sally to London, and doubtless you will crush a quart with him or a pottle pot; he will satisfy your bookseller for "The Dreamer," or any other little purchase you may recommend for me. You have pleased Miss Baillie very much both in public and in society, and though not fastidious, she is not, I think, particularly lavish of applause either way. A most valuable person is she, and as warm-hearted as she is brilliant.—

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[1] The Reverend Alexander Dyce says, 'N. T. stands for *Nathaniel Thompson*, the Tory bookseller, who published these Loyal Poems.'—[1839.]

Mrs. Scott and all our little folks are well. I am relieved of the labour of hearing Walter's lesson by a gallant son of the church, who with one leg of wood, and another of oak, walks to and fro from Melrose every day for that purpose. Pray stick to the dramatic work,[1] and never suppose either that you can be intrusive, or that I can be uninterested in whatever concerns you.—Yours,

'W. S.'

The tutor alluded to at the close of this letter was Mr. George Thomson, son of the minister of Melrose, who, when the house afforded better accommodation, was and continued for many years to be domesticated at Abbotsford. Scott had always a particular tenderness towards persons afflicted with any bodily misfortune; and Thomson, whose leg had been amputated in consequence of a rough casualty of his boyhood, had a special share in his favour from the high spirit with which he refused at the time to betray the name of the companion that had occasioned his mishap, and continued ever afterwards to struggle against its disadvantages. Tall, vigorous, athletic, a dauntless horseman, and expert at the singlestick, George formed a valuable as well as picturesque addition to the *tail* of the new laird, who often said, 'In the Dominie, like myself, accident has spoiled a capital lifeguardsman.' His many oddities and eccentricities in no degree interfered with the respect due to his amiable feelings, upright principles, and sound learning; nor did *Dominie Thamson* at all quarrel in after-times with the universal credence of the neighbourhood that he had furnished many features for the inimitable personage whose designation so nearly resembled his own; and if he has not yet 'wagged his head' in a 'pulpit o' his ain,' he well knows it has not been so for want of earnest and long-continued intercession on the part of the author of Guy Mannering.[2]

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[1] An edition of the British Dramatists had, I believe, been projected by Mr. Terry.

[2] Mr. Thomson died 8th January 1838, before the publication of the first edition of these Memoirs had been completed.—[1839.]

For many years Scott had accustomed himself to proceed in the composition of poetry along with that of prose essays of various descriptions; but it is a remarkable fact that he chose this period of perpetual noise and bustle, when he had not even a summer-house to himself, for the new experiment of carrying on two poems at the same time—and this too without suspending the heavy labour of his edition of Swift, to say nothing of the various lesser matters in which the Ballantynes were, from day to day, calling for the assistance of his judgment and his pen. In the same letter in which William Erskine acknowledges the receipt of the first four pages of Rokeby, he adverts also to the Bridal of Triermain as being already in rapid progress. The fragments of this second poem, inserted in the Register of the preceding year, had attracted considerable notice; the secret of their authorship had been well kept; and by some means, even in the shrewdest circles of Edinburgh, the belief had become prevalent that they proceeded not from Scott but from Erskine. Scott had no sooner completed his bargain as to the copyright of the unwritten Rokeby, than he resolved to pause from time to time in its composition, and weave those fragments into a shorter and lighter romance, executed in a different metre, and to be published anonymously, in a small pocket volume, as nearly as possible on the same day with the avowed quarto. He expected great amusement from the comparisons which the critics would no doubt indulge themselves in drawing between himself and this humble candidate; and Erskine good-humouredly entered into the scheme, undertaking to do nothing which should effectually suppress the notion of his having set himself up as a modest rival to his friend. Nay, he suggested a further refinement, which in the sequel had no small share in the success of this little plot upon the sagacity of the reviewers. Having said that he much admired the opening of the first canto of Rokeby, Erskine adds, 'I shall request your *accoucheur* to send me your *little Dugald* too as he gradually makes his progress. What I have seen is delightful. You are aware how difficult it is to form any opinion of a work, the general plan of which is unknown, transmitted merely in legs and wings as they are formed and feathered. Any remarks must be of the most minute and superficial kind, confined chiefly to the language, and other such subordinate matters. I shall be very much amused if the secret is kept and the knowing ones taken in. To prevent any discovery from your prose, what think you of putting down your ideas of what the preface ought to contain, and allowing me to write it over? And perhaps a quizzing review might be concocted.'

This last hint was welcome; and among other parts of the preface to Triermain which threw out 'the knowing ones,' certain Greek quotations interspersed in it are now accounted for. Scott, on his part, appears to have studiously interwoven into the piece allusions to personal feelings and experiences more akin to his friend's history and character than to his own; and he did so still more largely, when repeating this experiment, in the introductory parts of Harold the Dauntless.

The same post which conveyed William Erskine's letter above quoted, brought him an equally wise and kind one from Mr. Morritt, in answer to a fresh application for some minute details about the scenery and local traditions of the Valley of the Tees. Scott had promised to spend part of this autumn at Rokeby Park himself; but now, busied as he was with his planting operations at home, and continually urged by Ballantyne to have the poem ready for publication by Christmas, he would willingly have trusted his friend's knowledge in place of his own observation and research. Mr. Morritt gave him in reply various particulars, which I need not here repeat, but added—'I am really sorry, my dear Scott, at your abandonment of your kind intention of visiting Rokeby—and my sorrow is not quite selfish—for seriously, I wish you could have come, if but for a few days, in order, on the spot, to settle accurately in your mind the localities of the new poem, and all their petty circumstances, of which there are many that would give interest and ornament to your descriptions. I am too much flattered by your proposal of inscribing the poem to me, not to accept it with gratitude and pleasure. I shall always feel your friendship as an honour—we all wish our honours to be permanent—and yours promises mine at least a fair chance of immortality. I hope, however, you will not be obliged to write in a hurry on account of the impatience of your booksellers. They are, I think, ill advised in their proceeding, for surely the book will be the more likely to succeed from not being forced prematurely into this critical world. Do not be persuaded to risk your established fame on this hazardous experiment. If you want a few hundreds independent of these booksellers, your credit is so very good, now that you have got rid of your Old Man of the Sea, that it is no great merit to trust you, and I happen at this moment to have five or six for which I have no sort of demand—so rather than be obliged to spur Pegasus beyond the power of pulling him up when he is going too fast, do consult your own judgment and set the midwives of the trade at defiance. Don't be scrupulous to the disadvantage of your muse, and above all be not offended at me for a proposition which is meant in the true spirit of friendship. I am more than ever anxious for your success—the Lady of the Lake more than succeeded—I think Don Roderick is less popular—I want this work to be another Lady at the least. Surely it would be worth your while for such an object to spend a week of your time, and a portion of your Old Man's salary, in a mail-coach flight hither, were it merely to renew your acquaintance with the country, and to rectify the little misconceptions of a cursory view.—Ever affectionately yours, J. B. S. M.'

This appeal was not to be resisted. Scott, I believe, accepted Mr. Morritt's friendly offer so far as to ask his assistance in having some of Ballantyne's bills discounted: and he proceeded the week after to Rokeby, by the way of Flodden and Hexham, travelling on horseback, his eldest boy and girl on their ponies, while Mrs. Scott followed them in the carriage. Two little incidents that diversified this ride through Northumberland have found their way into print already; but, as he was fond of telling them both down to the end of his days, I must give them a place here also. Halting at Flodden to expound the field of battle to his young folks, he found that Marmion had, as might have been expected, benefited the keeper of the public-house there very largely; and the village Boniface, overflowing with gratitude, expressed his anxiety to have a *Scott's Head* for his sign-post. The poet demurred to this proposal, and assured mine host that nothing could be more appropriate than the portraiture of a foaming tankard, which already surmounted his doorway. 'Why, the painter-man has not made an ill job,' said the landlord, 'but I would fain have something more connected with the book that has brought me so much good custom.' He produced a well-thumbed copy, and handing it to the author, begged he would at least suggest a motto from the tale of Flodden Field. Scott opened the book at the death scene of the hero, and his eye was immediately caught by the 'inscription' in black letter—

> 'Drink, weary pilgrim, drink, and pray
> For the kind soul of Sibyl Grey,' etc.

'Well, my friend,' said he, 'what more would you have? You need but strike out one letter in the first of these lines, and make your painter-man, the next time he comes this way, print between the jolly tankard and your own name—

> Drink, weary pilgrim, drink and PAY.

Scott was delighted to find, on his return, that this suggestion had been adopted, and for aught I know, the romantic legend may still be visible.

The other story I shall give in the words of Mr. Gillies. 'It happened at a small country town that Scott suddenly required medical advice for one of his servants, and on en [illegible] iring if there was any doctor at the place, [illegible] there was two—one long established, and the other a newcomer. The latter gentleman, being luckily found at home, soon made his appearance;—a grave, sagacious-looking personage, attired in black, with a shovel hat, in whom, to his utter astonishment, Sir Walter recognised a Scotch blacksmith, who had formerly practised, with tolerable success, as a veterinary operator in the neighbourhood of Ashestiel.—"How, in all the world!" exclaimed he, "can it be possible that this is John Lundie?"—"In troth is it, your honour—just *a' that's for him.*"—"Well, but let us hear; you were a *horse*-doctor before; now, it seems, you are a *man*-doctor; how do you get on?"—"Ou, just extraordinar weel; for your honour maun ken my practice is vera sure and orthodox. I depend entirely upon twa *simples.*"—"And what may their names be? Perhaps it is a secret?"—"I'll tell your honour," in a low tone; "my twa simples are just *laudamy* and *calamy!*"—"Simples with a vengeance!" replied Scott. "But John, do you never happen to *kill* any of your patients?"—"Kill? Ou ay, may be sae! Whiles they die, and whiles no; but it's the will o' Providence. *Ony how, your honour, it wad be lang before it makes up for Flodden!*"'[1]

It was also in the course of this expedition that Scott first made acquaintance with the late excellent and venerable Shute Barrington, Bishop of Durham. The travellers having reached Auckland over night, were seeing the public rooms of the Castle at an early hour next morning, when the Bishop happened, in passing through one of them, to catch a glimpse of Scott's person, and immediately recognising him, from the likeness of the engravings by this time multiplied, introduced himself to the party, and insisted upon acting as cicerone. After showing them the picture-gallery and so forth, his Lordship invited them to join the morning service of the chapel, and when that was over, insisted on their remaining to breakfast. But Scott and his Lordship were by this time so much pleased with each other that they could not part so easily. The good Bishop ordered his horse,

[1] Reminiscences of Sir Walter Scott, p. 56.

nor did Scott observe without admiration the proud curveting of the animal on which his Lordship proposed to accompany him during the next stage of his progress. 'Why, yes, Mr. Scott,' said the gentle but high-spirited old man, 'I still like to feel my horse under me.' He was then in his 79th year, and survived to the age of ninety-two, the model in all things of a real prince of the Church. They parted after a ride of ten miles, with mutual regret; and on all subsequent rides in that direction, Bishop-Auckland was one of the poet's regular halting-places.

At Rokeby, on this occasion, Scott remained about a week; and I transcribe the following brief account of his proceedings while there from Mr. Morritt's *Memorandum*:—'I had, of course,' he says, 'had many previous opportunities of testing the almost conscientious fidelity of his local descriptions; but I could not help being singularly struck with the lights which this visit threw on that characteristic of his compositions. The morning after he arrived he said, "You have often given me materials for romance—now I want a good robber's cave and an old church of the right sort." We rode out, and he found what he wanted in the ancient slate quarries of Brignal and the ruined Abbey of Eggleston. I observed him noting down even the peculiar little wild flowers and herbs that accidentally grew round and on the side of a bold crag near his intended cave of Guy Denzil; and could not help saying, that as he was not to be upon oath in his work, daisies, violets, and primroses would be as poetical as any of the humble plants he was examining. I laughed, in short, at his scrupulousness; but I understood him when he replied, "that in nature herself no two scenes were exactly alike, and that whoever copied truly what was before his eyes, would possess the same variety in his descriptions, and exhibit apparently an imagination as boundless as the range of nature in the scenes he recorded; whereas—whoever trusted to imagination, would soon find his own mind circumscribed, and contracted to a few favourite images, and the repetition of these would sooner or later produce that very monotony and barrenness which had always haunted descriptive poetry in the hands of any but the patient worshippers of truth. Besides which," he said, "local names and peculiarities make a fictitious story look so much better in the face." In fact, from his boyish habits, he was but half satisfied with the most beautiful scenery when he could not connect with it some local legend, and when I was forced sometimes to confess with the Knife-grinder, "Story! God bless you! I have none to tell, sir"—he would laugh and say, "then let us make one—nothing so easy as to make a tradition."' Mr. Morritt adds, that he had brought with him about half the Bridal of Triermain—told him that he meant to bring it out the same week with Rokeby—and promised himself particular satisfaction in *laying a trap for Jeffrey*; who, however, as we shall see, escaped the snare.

Some of the following letters will show with what rapidity, after having refreshed and stored his memory with the localities of Rokeby, he proceeded in the composition of the romance:—

'*To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq.*

'ABBOTSFORD, 12*th October* 1812.

'MY DEAR MORRITT—I have this morning returned from Dalkeith House, to which I was whisked amid the fury of an election tempest, and I found your letter on my table. More on such a subject cannot be said among friends who give each other credit for feeling as they ought.

'We peregrinated over Stanmore, and visited the Castles of Bowes, Brough, Appleby, and Brougham with great interest. Lest our spirit of chivalry thus excited should lack employment, we found ourselves, that is, *I* did, at Carlisle, engaged in the service of two distressed ladies, being no other than our friends Lady Douglas and Lady Louisa Stuart, who overtook us there, and who would have had great trouble in finding quarters, the election being in full vigour, if we had not anticipated their puzzle, and secured a private house capable of holding us all. Some distress occurred, I believe, among the waiting damsels, whose case I had not so carefully considered, for I heard a sentimental exclamation—"Am I to sleep with the greyhounds?" which I conceived to proceed from Lady Douglas's *suivante*, from the exquisite sensibility of tone with which it was uttered, especially as I beheld the fair one descend from the carriage with three half-bound volumes of a novel in her hand. Not having in my power to alleviate her woes, by offering her either a part or the whole of my own couch—"*Transeat*," quoth I, "*cum cæteris erroribus*."

'I am delighted with your Cumberland admirer,[1] and give him credit for his visit to the vindicator of Homer; but you missed one of another description, who passed Rokeby with great regret, I mean General John Malcolm, the Persian envoy, the Delhi resident, the poet, the warrior, the polite man, and the Borderer. He is really a fine fellow. I met him at Dalkeith, and we returned together;—he has just left me, after drinking his coffee. A fine time we had of it, talking of Troy town, and Babel, and Persepolis, and Delhi, and Langholm, and Burnfoot;[2] with all manner of episodes about Iskendiar, Rustan, and Johnnie Armstrong. Do you know, that poem of Ferdusi's must be beautiful. He read me some very splendid extracts which he had himself translated. Should you meet him in London, I have given him charge to be acquainted with you, for I am sure you will like each other. To be sure, I know him little, but I like his frankness and his sound ideas of morality and policy; and I have observed, that when I have had no great liking to persons at the beginning, it has usually pleased Heaven, as Slender says, to decrease it on further acquaintance. Adieu, I must mount my horse. Our last journey was so delightful that we have every temptation to repeat it. Pray give our kind love to the lady, and believe me ever yours, WALTER SCOTT.'

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[1] This alluded to a ridiculous hunter of lions, who being met by Mr. Morritt in the grounds at Rokeby, disclaimed all taste for picturesque beauties, but overwhelmed their owner with Homeric Greek; of which he had told Scott.

[2] *Burnfoot* is the name of a farm-house on the Buccleuch estate, not far from Langholm, where the late Sir John Malcolm and his distinguished brothers were born. Their grandfather had, I believe, found refuge there after forfeiting a good estate and an ancient baronetcy in the *affair* of 1715. A monument to the gallant General's memory has recently been erected near the spot of his birth.

'*To the Same.*

'EDINBURGH, 29*th November* 1812.

'MY DEAR MORRITT—I have been, and still am, working very hard, in hopes to face the public by Christmas, and I think I have hitherto succeeded in throwing some interest into the piece. It is, however, a darker and more gloomy interest than I intended; but involving one's self with bad company, whether in fiction or in reality, is the way not to get out of it easily; so I have been obliged to bestow more pains and trouble upon Bertram, and one or two blackguards whom he picks up in the slate quarries, than what I originally designed. I am very desirous to have your opinion of the three first Cantos, for which purpose, so soon as I can get them collected, I will send the sheets under cover to Mr. Freeling, whose omnipotent frank will transmit them to Rokeby, where, I presume, you have been long since comfortably settled—

> So York may overlook the town of York.
> 3rd King Henry VI. Act I. Scene 4.

'I trust you will read it with some partiality, because, if I have not been so successful as I could wish in describing your lovely and romantic glens, it has partly arisen from my great anxiety to do it well, which is often attended with the very contrary effect. There are two or three songs, and particularly one in praise of Brignal Banks, which I trust you will like—because, *entre nous*, I like them myself. One of them is a little dashing banditti song, called and entitled Allen-a-Dale. I think you will be able to judge for yourself in about a week. Pray, how shall I send you the *entire goose*, which will be too heavy to travel the same way with its *giblets*—for the Carlisle coach is terribly inaccurate about parcels? I fear I have made one blunder in mentioning the brooks which flow into the Tees. I have made the Balder distinct from that which comes down Thorsgill—I hope I am not mistaken. You will see the passage; and if they are the same rivulet, the leaf must be cancelled.

'I trust this will find Mrs. Morritt pretty well; and I am glad to find she has been better for her little tour. We were delighted with ours, except in respect of its short duration, and Sophia and Walter hold their heads very high among their untravelled companions, from the predominance acquired by their visit to England. You are not perhaps aware of the polish which is supposed to be acquired by the most transitory intercourse with your more refined side of the Tweed. There was an honest carter who once applied to me respecting a plan which he had formed of breeding his son, a great booby of twenty, to the Church. As the best way of evading the scrape, I asked him whether he thought his son's language was quite adapted for the use of a public speaker? to which he answered, with great readiness, that he could knap English with any one, having twice driven his father's cart to Etal coal-hill.

'I have called my heroine Matilda. I don't much like Agnes, though I can't tell why, unless it is because it begins like Agag. Matilda is a name of unmanageable length; but, after all, is better than none, and my poor damsel was likely to go without one in my indecision.

'We are all hungering and thirsting for news from Russia. If Boney's devil does not help him, he is in a poor way. The Leith letters talk of the unanimity of the Russians as being most exemplary; and troops pour in from all quarters of their immense empire. Their commissariat is well managed under the Prince Duke of Oldenburgh. This was their weak point in former wars.

'Adieu! Mrs. Scott and the little people send love to Mrs. Morritt and you.—Ever yours,

'Walter Scott.'

'*To the Same.*

'Edinburgh, *Thursday,*
10th December 1812.

'My dear Morritt—I have just time to say that I have received your letters, and am delighted that Rokeby pleases the owner. As I hope the whole will be printed off before Christmas, it will scarce be worth while to send you the other sheets till it reaches you altogether. Your criticisms are the best proof of your kind attention to the poem. I need not say I will pay them every attention in the next edition. But some of the faults are so interwoven with the story, that they must stand. Denzil, for instance, is essential to me, though, as you say, not very interesting; and I assure you that, generally speaking, the *poeta loquitur* has a bad effect in narrative; and when you have twenty things to tell, it is better to be slatternly than tedious. The fact is, that the tediousness of many really good poems arises from an attempt to support the same tone throughout, which often occasions periphrasis, and always stiffness. I am quite sensible that I have often carried the opposite custom too far; but I am apt to impute it partly to not being able to bring out my own ideas well, and partly to haste—not to error in the system. This would, however, lead to a long discussion, more fit for the fireside than for a letter. I need not say that, the poem being in fact your own, you are at perfect liberty to dispose of the sheets as you please. I am glad my geography is pretty correct. It is too late to inquire if Rokeby is insured, for I have burned it down in Canto V.; but I suspect you will bear me no greater grudge than at the noble Russian who burned Moscow. Glorious news today from the north—*pereat iste!* Mrs. Scott, Sophia, and

Walter, join in best compliments to Mrs. Morritt; and I am, in great haste, ever faithfully yours,

'Walter Scott.

'*P.S.*—I have heard of Lady Hood by a letter from herself. She is well, and in high spirits, and sends me a pretty topaz seal, with a talisman which secures this letter, and signifies (it seems), which one would scarce have expected from its appearance, my name.'

We are now close upon the end of this busy twelvemonth; but I must not turn the leaf to 1813 without noticing one of its miscellaneous incidents—his first intercourse by letter with the poet Crabbe. Mr. Hatchard, the publisher of his 'Tales,' forwarded a copy of the book to Scott as soon as it was ready; and, the bookseller having communicated to his author some flattering expressions in Scott's letter of acknowledgment, Mr. Crabbe addressed him as follows:—

'*To Walter Scott, Esq., Edinburgh.*

'Merston, Grantham, 13*th October* 1812.

'Sir—Mr. Hatchard, judging rightly of the satisfaction it would afford me, has been so obliging as to communicate your two letters, in one of which you desire my "Tales" to be sent; in the other, you acknowledge the receipt of them; and in both you mention my verses in such terms, that it would be affected in me were I to deny, and I think unjust if I were to conceal, the pleasure you give me. I am indeed highly gratified.

'I have long entertained a hearty wish to be made known to a poet whose works are so greatly and so universally admired; and I continued to hope that I might at some time find a common friend, by whose intervention I might obtain that honour; but I am confined by duties near my home, and by sickness in it. It may be long before I be in town, and then no such opportunity might offer. Excuse me, then, sir, if I gladly seize this which now occurs to express my thanks for the politeness of your expressions, as well as my desire of being known to a gentleman who had delighted and affected me, and moved all the passions and feelings in turn, I believe—Envy surely excepted—certainly, if I know myself, but in a moderate degree. I truly rejoice in your success; and while I am entertaining in my way, a certain set of readers, for the most part, probably, of peculiar turn and habit, I can with pleasure see the effect you produce on all. Mr. Hatchard tells me that he hopes or expects that thousands will read my "Tales," and I am convinced that your publisher might, in like manner, so speak of your ten thousands; but this, though it calls to mind the passage, is no true comparison with the related prowess of David and Saul, because I have no evil spirit to arise and trouble me on the occasion; though, if I had, I know no David whose skill is so likely to allay it. Once more, sir, accept my best thanks, with my hearty wishes for your health and happiness, who am, with great esteem, and true respect, dear sir, your obedient servant,

'GEORGE CRABBE.'

I cannot produce Scott's reply to this communication. Mr. Crabbe appears to have, in the course of the year, sent him a copy of all his works, 'ex dono auctoris,' and there passed between them several letters, one or two of which I must quote.

'*To Walter Scott, Esq., Edinburgh.*

'Know you, sir, a gentleman in Edinburgh, A. Brunton (the Rev.) who dates St. John Street, and who asks my assistance in furnishing hymns which have relation to the Old or New Testament—anything which might suit the purpose of those who are cooking up a book of Scotch Psalmody? Who is Mr. Brunton? What is his situation? If I could help one who needed help I would do it cheerfully—but have no great opinion of this undertaking. . . .

'With every good wish, yours sincerely,

'GEO. CRABBE.'

Scott's answer to this letter expresses the opinions he always held in conversation on the important subject to which it refers; and acting upon which, he himself at various times declined taking any part in the business advocated by Dr. Brunton :—

'*To the Rev. George Crabbe, Muston, Grantham.*

'My dear Sir—I was favoured with your kind letter some time ago. Of all people in the world, I am least entitled to demand regularity of correspondence; for being, one way and another, doomed to a great deal more writing than suits my indolence, I am sometimes tempted to envy the reverend hermit of Prague, confessor to the niece of Queen Gorboduc, who never saw either pen or ink. Mr. Brunton is a very respectable clergyman of Edinburgh, and I believe the work in which he has solicited your assistance is one adopted by the General Assembly, or Convocation of the Kirk. I have no notion that he has any individual interest in it; he is a well-educated and liberal-minded man, and generally esteemed. I have no particular acquaintance with him myself, though we speak together. He is at this very moment sitting on the outside of the bar of our Supreme Court, within which I am fagging as a clerk; but as he is hearing the opinion of the judges upon an action for augmentation of stipend to him and to his brethren, it would not, I conceive, be a very favourable time to canvass a literary topic. But you are quite safe with him; and having so much command of scriptural language, which appears to me essential to the devotional poetry of Christians, I am sure you can assist his purpose much more than any man alive.

'I think those hymns which do not immediately recall the warm and exalted language of the Bible are apt to be, however elegant, rather cold and flat for the purposes of devotion. You will readily believe that I do not approve of the vague and indiscriminate Scripture language which the fanatics of old, and the modern Methodists, have adopted, but merely that solemnity and peculiarity of diction, which at once puts the reader and hearer upon his guard as to the purpose of the poetry. To my Gothic ear, indeed, the *Stabat Mater*, the *Dies Iræ*, and some of the other hymns of the Catholic Church, are more solemn and affecting than the fine classical poetry of Buchanan; the one has the gloomy dignity of a Gothic church, and reminds us instantly of the worship to which it is dedicated; the other is more like a Pagan temple, recalling to our memory the classical and fabulous deities.[1] This is, probably, all referable to the association of ideas—that is, if the "association of ideas" continues to be the universal pick-lock of all metaphysical difficulties, as it was when I studied moral philosophy—or to any other more fashionable universal solvent which may have succeeded to it in reputation. Adieu, my dear sir,—I hope you and your family will long enjoy all happiness and prosperity. Never be discouraged from the constant use of your charming talent. The opinions of reviewers are really too contradictory to found anything upon them, whether they are favourable or otherwise; for it is usually their principal object to display the abilities of the writers of the critical lucubrations themselves. Your "Tales" are universally admired here. I go but little out, but the few judges whose opinions I have been accustomed to look up to, are unanimous.—Ever yours, most truly,

'WALTER SCOTT.'

'*To Walter Scott, Esq., Edinburgh.*

'MY DEAR SIR—Law, then, is your profession—I mean a profession you give your mind and time to—but how "fag as a *clerk*"? Clerk is a name for a learned person, I know, in our Church; but how the same hand which held the pen of Marmion, holds that with which a clerk fags, unless a clerk means something vastly more than I understand—is not to be comprehended. I wait for elucidation. Know you, dear sir, I have often thought I should love to read *reports*—that is, brief histories of extraordinary cases, with the judgments. If that is what is meant by *reports*, such reading must be pleasant; but, probably, I entertain wrong ideas, and could not understand the books I think so engaging. Yet I conclude there are *histories of cases*, and have often thought of consulting Hatchard whether he knew of such kind of reading, but hitherto I have rested in ignorance. . . . —Yours truly, GEORGE CRABBE.'

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[1] See Life of Dryden, Scott's Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. i. p. 293.

'*To the Rev. George Crabbe.*

'MY DEAR SIR—I have too long delayed to thank you for the most kind and acceptable present of your three volumes. Now am I doubly armed, since I have a set for my cabin at Abbotsford as well as in town; and, to say truth, the auxiliary copy arrived in good time, for my original one suffers as much by its general popularity among my young people, as a popular candidate from the hugs and embraces of his democratical admirers. The clearness and accuracy of your painting, whether natural or moral, renders, I have often remarked, your works generally delightful to those whose youth might render them insensible to the other beauties with which they abound. There are a sort of pictures—surely the most valuable, were it but for that reason—which strike the uninitiated as much as they do the connoisseur, though the last alone can render reason for his admiration. Indeed our old friend Horace knew what he was saying when he chose to address his ode, "*Virginibus puerisque*," and so did Pope when he told somebody he had the mob on the side of his version of Homer, and did not mind the high-flying critics at Button's. After all, if a faultless poem could be produced, I am satisfied it would tire the critics themselves, and annoy the whole reading world with the spleen.

'You must be delightfully situated in the Vale of Belvoir—a part of England for which I entertain a special kindness, for the sake of the gallant hero, Robin Hood, who, as probably you will readily guess, is no small favourite of mine; his indistinct ideas concerning the doctrine of *meum* and *tuum* being no great objection to an outriding Borderer. I am happy to think that your station is under the protection of the Rutland family, of whom fame speaks highly. Our lord of the "cairn and the scaur," waste wilderness and hungry hills, for many a league around, is the Duke of Buccleuch, the head of my clan; a kind and benevolent landlord, a warm and zealous friend, and the husband of a lady—*comme il y en a peu.* They are both great admirers of Mr. Crabbe's poetry, and would be happy to know him, should he ever come to Scotland, and venture into the Gothic halls of a Border chief. The early and uniform kindness of this family, with the friendship of the late and present Lord Melville, enabled me, some years ago, to exchange my toils as a barrister for the lucrative and respectable situation of one of the Clerks of our Supreme Court, which only requires a certain routine of official duty, neither laborious nor calling for any exertion of the mind; so that my time is entirely at my own command, except when I am attending the Court, which seldom occupies more than two hours of the morning during sitting. I besides hold *in commendam* the Sheriffdom of Ettrick Forest, which is now no forest; so that I am a pluralist as to law appointments, and have, as Dogberry says, "two gowns and everything handsome about me."[1]

'I have often thought it is the most fortunate thing for bards like you and me to have an established profession, and professional character, to render us independent of those worthy gentlemen, the retailers, or, as some have called them, the midwives of literature, who are so much taken up with the abortions they bring into the world that they are scarcely able to bestow the proper care upon young and flourishing babes like ours. That, however, is only a mercantile way of looking at the matter; but did any of my sons show poetical talent, of which, to my great satisfaction, there are no appearances, the first thing I should do would be to inculcate upon him the duty of cultivating some honourable profession, and qualifying himself to play a more respectable part in society than the mere poet. And as the best corollary of my doctrine, I would make him get your tale of "The Patron" by heart from beginning to end. It is curious enough that you should have republished the "Village" for the purpose of sending your young men to college, and I should have written the Lay of the Last Minstrel for the purpose of buying a new horse for the Volunteer Cavalry. I must now send this scrawl into town to get a frank, for, God knows, it is not worthy of postage. With the warmest wishes for your health, prosperity, and increase of fame—though it needs not—I remain most sincerely and affectionately yours, WALTER SCOTT.'[1]

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[1] Much Ado about Nothing, Act IV. Scene 2.

The contrast of the two poets' epistolary styles is highly amusing; but I have introduced these specimens less on that account, than as marking the cordial confidence which a very little intercourse was sufficient to establish between men so different from each other in most of the habits of life. It will always be considered as one of the most pleasing peculiarities in Scott's history, that he was the friend of every great contemporary poet: Crabbe, as we shall see more largely in the sequel, was no exception to the rule: yet I could hardly name one of them who, manly principles and the cultivation of literature apart, had many points of resemblance to him; and surely not one who had fewer than Crabbe.

Scott continued, this year, his care for the Edinburgh Annual Register—the historical department of which was again supplied by Mr. Southey. The poetical miscellany owed its opening piece, the Ballad of Polydore, to the readiness with which Scott entered into correspondence with its author, who sent it to him anonymously, with a letter which, like the verses, might well have excited much interest in his mind, even had it not concluded with stating the writer's age to be *fifteen*. Scott invited the youth to visit him in the country, was greatly pleased with the modesty of his manners and the originality of his conversation, and wrote to Joanna Baillie that, 'though not one of the crimps for the muses,' he thought he could hardly be mistaken in believing that in the boyish author of Polydore he had discovered a true genius. When I mention the name of my friend William Howison of Clydegrove, it will be allowed that he prognosticated wisely. He continued to correspond with this young gentleman and his father, and gave both much advice, for which both were most grateful. There was inserted in the same volume a set of beautiful stanzas, inscribed to Scott by Mr. Wilson, under the title of the 'Magic Mirror,' in which that enthusiastic young poet also bears a lofty and lasting testimony to the gentle kindness with which his earlier efforts had been encouraged by him whom he designates, for the first time, by what afterwards became one of his standing titles, that of 'The Great Magician.'

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[1] Several of these letters having been enclosed in franked covers, which have perished, I am unable to affix the exact dates to them.

'Onwards a figure came, with stately brow,
  And, as he glanced upon the ruin'd pile
A look of regal pride, "Say, who art thou
  (His countenance bright'ning with a scornful smile,
He sternly cried), "whose footsteps rash profane
The wild romantic realm where I have willed to reign?"

'But ere to these proud words I could reply,
  How changed that scornful face to soft and mild!
A witching frenzy glitter'd in his eye,
  Harmless, withal, as that of playful child.
And when once more the gracious vision spoke,
  I felt the voice familiar to mine ear;
While many a faded dream of earth awoke,
  Connected strangely with that unknown seer,
Who now stretch'd forth his arm, and on the sand
A circle round me traced, as with magician's wand,' etc. etc.

Scott's own chief contribution to this volume was a brief account of the Life and Poems (hitherto unpublished)[1] of Patrick Carey, whom he pronounces to have been not only as stout a cavalier, but almost as good a poet as his contemporary Lovelace. That Essay was expanded, and prefixed to an edition of Carey's 'Trivial Poems and Triolets,' which Scott published in 1820; but its circulation in either shape has been limited: and I believe I shall be gratifying the majority of my readers by here transcribing some paragraphs of his beautiful and highly characteristic introduction of this forgotten poet of the 17th century.

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[1] The Rev. Alexander Dyce informs me that *nine* of Carey's pieces were printed in 1771, for J. Murray of Fleet Street, in a quarto of thirty-five pages, entitled 'Poems from a MS. written in the time of Oliver Cromwell.' This rare tract had never fallen into Scott's hands. —[1839.]

The present age has been so distinguished for research into poetical antiquities, that the discovery of an unknown bard is, in certain chosen literary circles, held as curious as an augmentation of the number of fixed stars would be esteemed by astronomers. It is true, these 'blessed twinklers of the night' are so far removed from us that they afford no more light than serves barely to evince their existence to the curious investigator; and in like manner the pleasure derived from the revival of an obscure poet is rather in proportion to the rarity of his volume than to its merit; yet this pleasure is not inconsistent with reason and principle. We know by every day's experience the peculiar interest which the lapse of ages confers upon works of human art. The clumsy strength of the ancient castles, which, when raw from the hand of the builder, inferred only the oppressive power of the barons who reared them, is now broken by partial ruin into proper subjects for the poet or the painter; and as Mason has beautifully described the change,

——Time
Has mouldered into beauty many a tower,
Which, when it frowned with all its battlements,
Was only terrible.——

The monastery, too, which was at first but a fantastic monument of the superstitious devotion of monarchs, or of the purple pride of fattened abbots, has gained by the silent influence of antiquity, the power of impressing awe and devotion. Even the stains and weather-taints upon the battlements of such buildings add, like the scars of a veteran, to the affecting impression:

For time has softened what was harsh when new,
And now the stains are all of sober hue;
The living stains which nature's hand alone,
Profuse of life, pours forth upon the stone.
CRABBE.

If such is the effect of Time in adding interest to the labours of the architect, if partial destruction is compensated by the additional interest of that which remains, can we deny his exerting a similar influence upon those subjects which are sought after by the bibliographer and poetical antiquary? The obscure poet, who is detected by their keen research, may indeed have possessed but a slender portion of that spirit which has buoyed up the works of distinguished contemporaries during the course of centuries, yet still his verses shall, in the lapse of time, acquire an interest, which they did not possess in the eyes of his own generation. The wrath of the critic, like that of the son of Ossian, flies from the foe that is low. Envy, base as she is, has one property of the lion, and cannot prey on carcases; she must drink the blood of a sentient victim, and tear the limbs that are yet warm with vital life. Faction, if the ancient has suffered her persecution, serves only to endear him to the recollection of posterity, whose generous compassion overpays him for the injuries he sustained while in life. And thus freed from the operation of all unfavourable prepossessions, his merit, if he can boast any, has more than fair credit with his readers. This, however, is but part of his advantages. The mere attribute of antiquity is of itself sufficient to interest the fancy, by the lively and powerful train of associations which it awakens. Had the pyramids of Egypt, equally disagreeable in form and senseless as to utility, been the work of any living tyrant, with what feelings, save those of scorn and derision, could we have regarded such a waste of labour? But the sight, nay the very mention of these wonderful monuments, is associated with the dark and sublime ideas which vary their tinge according to the favourite hue of our studies. The Christian divine recollects the land of banishment and of refuge; to the eyes of the historian's fancy, they excite the shades of Pharaohs and of Ptolemies, of Cheops and Merops, and Sesostris drawn in triumph by his sceptred slaves; the philosopher beholds the first rays of moral truth as they dawned on the hieroglyphic sculptures of Thebes and Memphis; and the poet sees the fires of magic blazing upon the mystic altars of a land of incantation. Nor is the grandeur of size essential to such feelings, any more than the properties of grace and utility. Even the rudest remnant of a feudal tower, even the obscure and almost indistinguishable vestige of an altogether unknown edifice, has power to awaken such trains of fancy. We have a fellow interest with the 'son of the winged days,' over whose fallen habitation we tread:

> The massy stones, though hewn most roughly, show
> The hand of man had once at least been there.
>
> WORDSWORTH.

Similar combinations give a great part of the delight we receive from ancient poetry. In the rude song of the Scald, we regard less the strained imagery and extravagance of epithet, than the wild impressions which it conveys of the dauntless resolution, savage superstition, rude festivity, and ceaseless depredation of the ancient Scandinavians. In the metrical romance, we pardon the long, tedious, and bald enumeration of trifling particulars; the reiterated sameness of the eternal combats between knights and giants; the overpowering languor of the love speeches, and the merciless length and similarity of description—when Fancy whispers to us, that such strains may have cheered the sleepless pillow of the Black Prince on the memorable eves of Cressy or Poictiers. There is a certain romance of Ferumbras, which Robert the Bruce read to his few followers to divert their thoughts from the desperate circumstances in which they were placed, after an unsuccessful attempt to rise against the English. Is there a true Scotsman who, being aware of this anecdote, would be disposed to yawn over the romance of Ferumbras? Or, on the contrary, would not the image of the dauntless hero, inflexible in defeat, beguiling the anxiety of his war-worn attendants by the lays of the minstrel, give to these rude lays themselves an interest beyond Greek and Roman fame?

The year 1812 had the usual share of minor literary labours—such as contributions to the journals; and before it closed, the Romance of Rokeby was finished. Though it had been long in hand, the MS. sent to the printer bears abundant evidence of its being the *prima cura:* three cantos at least reached Ballantyne through the Melrose post—written on paper of various sorts and sizes—full of blots and interlineations—the closing couplets of a despatch now and then encircling the page, and mutilated by the breaking of the seal.

According to the recollection of Mr. Cadell, though James Ballantyne read the poem, as the sheets were advancing through the press, to his usual circle of literary *dilettanti*, their whispers were far from exciting in Edinburgh such an intensity of expectation as had been witnessed in the case of The Lady of the Lake. He adds, however, that it was looked for with undiminished anxiety in the south. 'Send me Rokeby,' Byron writes to Murray on seeing it advertised,—'Who the devil is he? No matter—he has good connexions, and will be well introduced.'[1] Such, I suppose, was the general feeling in London. I well remember, being in those days a young student at Oxford, how the booksellers' shops there were beleaguered for the earliest copies, and how he that had been so fortunate as to secure one was followed to his chambers by a tribe of friends, all as eager to hear it read as ever horse-jockeys were to see the conclusion of a match at Newmarket; and indeed not a few of those enthusiastic academics had bets depending on the issue of the struggle, which they considered the elder favourite as making, to keep his own ground against the fiery rivalry of Childe Harold.

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[1] Byron's Life and Works, vol. ii. p. 169.

The poem was published a day or two before Scott returned to Edinburgh from Abbotsford, between which place and Mertoun he had divided his Christmas vacation. On the 9th and 10th of January 1813, he thus addresses his friends at Sunninghill and Hampstead:—

'*To George Ellis, Esq.*

'MY DEAR ELLIS—I am sure you will place it to anything rather than want of kindness that I have been so long silent—so very long, indeed, that I am not quite sure whether the fault is on my side or yours—but, be it what it may, it can never, I am sure, be laid to forgetfulness in either. This comes to train you on to the merciful reception of a Tale of the Civil Wars; not political, however, but merely a pseudo-romance of pseudo-chivalry. I have converted a lusty buccaneer into a hero with some effect; but the worst of all my undertakings is, that my rogue always, in despite of me, turns out my hero. I know not how this should be—I am myself, as Hamlet says, "indifferent honest"; and my father, though an attorney (as you will call him), was one of the most honest men, as well as gentlemanlike, that ever breathed. I am sure I can bear witness to that—for if he had at all *smacked*, or *grown to*, like the son of Lancelot Gobbo, he might have left us all as rich as Crœsus, besides having the pleasure of taking a fine primrose path himself, instead of squeezing himself through a tight gate and up a steep ascent, and leaving us the decent competence of an honest man's children. As to our more ancient pedigree, I should be loath to vouch for them. My grandfather was a horse-jockey and cattle-dealer, and made a fortune; my great-grandfather a Jacobite and traitor (as the times called him), and lost one; and after him intervened one or two half-starved lairds, who rode a lean horse, and were followed by leaner greyhounds; gathered with difficulty a hundred pounds from a hundred tenants; fought duels; cocked their hats,—and called themselves gentlemen. Then we come to the old Border times, cattle-driving, halters, and so forth, for which, in the matter of honesty, very little I suppose can be said—at least in modern acceptation of the word. Upon the whole, I am inclined to think it is owing to the earlier part of this inauspicious generation that I uniformly find myself in the same scrape in my fables, and that, in spite of the most obstinate determination to the contrary, the greatest rogue in my canvass always stands out as the most conspicuous and prominent figure. All this will be a riddle to you, unless you have received a certain packet, which the Ballantynes were to have sent under Freeling's or Croker's cover, so soon as they could get a copy done up.

'And now let me gratulate you upon the renovated vigour of your fine old friends the Russians. By the Lord, sir! it is most famous this campaign of theirs. I was not one of the very sanguine persons who anticipated the actual capture of Buonaparte—a hope which rather proceeded from the ignorance of those who cannot conceive that military movements, upon a large scale, admit of such a force being accumulated upon any particular point as may, by abandonment of other considerations, always ensure the escape of an individual. But I had no hope, in my time, of seeing the dry bones of the Continent so warm with life again, as this revivification of the Russians proves them to be. I look anxiously for the effect of these great events on Prussia, and even upon Saxony; for I think Boney will hardly trust himself again in Germany, now that he has been plainly shown, both in Spain and Russia, that protracted stubborn unaccommodating resistance will foil those grand exertions in the long run. All laud be to Lord Wellington, who first taught that great lesson.

'Charlotte is with me just now at this little scrub habitation, where we weary ourselves all day in looking at our projected improvements, and then slumber over the fire, I pretending to read, and she to work trout-nets, or cabbage-nets, or some such article. What is Canning about? Is there any chance of our getting him in? Surely Ministers cannot hope to do without him.—Believe me, dear Ellis, ever truly yours, W. Scott.

'Abbotsford, *9th January* 1813.'

'*To Miss Joanna Baillie.*

'Abbotsford, *January* 10, 1813.

'Your kind encouragement, my dear friend, has given me spirits to complete the lumbering quarto, which I hope has reached you by this time. I have gone on with my story *forth right*, without troubling myself excessively about the development of the plot and other critical matters—

But shall we go mourn for that, my dear?
  The pale moon shines by night,
And when we wander here and there,
  We then do go most right.

I hope you will like Bertram to the end; he is a Caravaggio sketch, which, I may acknowledge to you—but tell it not in Gath—I rather pique myself upon; and he is within the keeping of Nature, though critics will say to the contrary. It may be difficult to fancy that any one should take a sort of pleasure in bringing out such a character, but I suppose it is partly owing to bad reading, and ill-directed reading, when I was young. No sooner had I corrected the last sheet of Rokeby, than I escaped to this Patmos as blythe as bird on tree, and have been ever since most decidedly idle—that is to say, with busy idleness. I have been banking, and securing, and dyking against the river, and planting willows, and aspens, and weeping birches, around my new old well, which I think I told you I had constructed last summer. I have now laid the foundations of a famous background of copse, with pendant trees in front; and I have only to beg a few years to see how my colours will come out of the canvas. Alas! who can promise that? But somebody will take my place—and enjoy them, whether I do or no. My old friend and pastor, Principal Robertson (the historian), when he was not expected to survive many weeks, still watched the setting of the blossom upon some fruit trees in the garden with as much interest as if it was possible he could have seen the fruit come to maturity, and moralized on his own conduct, by observing that we act upon the same inconsistent motive throughout life. It is well we do so for those that are to come after us. I could almost dislike the man who refuses to plant walnut-trees, because they do not bear fruit till the second generation; and so—many thanks to our ancestors, and much joy to our successors, and truce to my fine and very new strain of morality.—Yours ever, W. S.'

The following letter lets us completely behind the scenes at the publication of Rokeby. The 'horrid story' it alludes to was that of a young woman found murdered on New Year's Day in the highway between Greta Bridge and Barnard Castle—a crime the perpetrator of which was never discovered. The account of a parallel atrocity in Galloway, and the mode of its detection, will show the reader from what source Scott drew one of the most striking incidents in his Guy Mannering:—

'*To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., Rokeby Park.*

'EDINBURGH, 12*th January* 1813.

'DEAR MORRITT—Yours I have just received in mine office at the Register-House, which will excuse this queer sheet of paper. The publication of Rokeby was delayed till Monday, to give the London publishers a fair start. My copies, that is, my friends', were all to be got off about Friday or Saturday; but yours may have been a little later, as it was to be what they call a picked one. I will call at Ballantyne's as I return from this place, and close the letter with such news as I can get about it there. The book has gone off here very bobbishly; for the impression of 3000 and upwards is within two or three score of being exhausted, and the demand for these continuing faster than they can be boarded. I am heartily glad of this, for now I have nothing to fear but a bankruptcy in the Gazette of Parnassus; but the loss of five or six thousand pounds to my good friends and school-companions would have afflicted me very much. I wish we could whistle you here to-day. Ballantyne always gives a christening dinner, at which the Duke of Buccleuch, and a great many of my friends, are formally feasted. He has always the best singing that can be heard in Edinburgh, and we have usually a very pleasant party, at which your health as patron and proprietor of Rokeby will be faithfully and honourably remembered.

'Your horrid story reminds me of one in Galloway, where the perpetrator of a similar enormity on a poor idiot girl was discovered by means of the print of his foot which he left upon the clay floor of the cottage in the death-struggle. It pleased Heaven (for nothing short of a miracle could have done it) to enlighten the understanding of an old ram-headed sheriff, who was usually nick-named Leather-head. The steps which he took to discover the murderer were most sagacious. As the poor girl was pregnant (for it was not a case of violation), it was pretty clear that her paramour had done the deed, and equally so that he must be a native of the district. The sheriff caused the minister to advertise from the pulpit that the girl would be buried on a particular day, and that all persons in the neighbourhood were invited to attend the funeral, to show their detestation of such an enormous crime, as well as to evince their own innocence. This was sure to bring the murderer to the funeral. When the people were assembled in the kirk, the doors were locked by the sheriff's order, and the shoes of all the men were examined; that of the murderer was detected by the measure of the foot, tread, etc., and a peculiarity in the mode in which the sole of one of them had been patched. The remainder of the curious chain of evidence upon which he was convicted will suit best with twilight, or a blinking candle, being too long for a letter. The fellow bore a most excellent character, and had committed this crime for no other reason that could be alleged, than that, having been led accidentally into an intrigue with this poor wretch, his pride revolted at the ridicule which was likely to attend the discovery.

'On calling at Ballantyne's, I find, as I had anticipated, that your copy, being of royal size, requires some particular nicety in hot-pressing. It will be sent by the Carlisle mail *quam primum*.—Ever yours,

'WALTER SCOTT.

'*P.S.*—Love to Mrs. Morritt. John Ballantyne says he has just about eighty copies left, out of 3250, this being the second day of publication, and the book a two-guinea one.'

It will surprise no one to hear that Mr. Morritt assured his friend he considered Rokeby as the best of all his poems. The admirable, perhaps the unique fidelity of the local descriptions, might alone have swayed, for I will not say it perverted, the judgment of the lord of that beautiful and thenceforth classical domain; and, indeed, I must admit that I never understood or appreciated half the charm of this poem until I had become familiar with its scenery. But Scott himself had not designed to rest his strength on these descriptions. He said to James Ballantyne while the work was in progress (September 2), 'I hope the thing will do, chiefly because the world will not expect from *me* a poem of which the interest turns upon *character*'; and in another letter (October 28, 1812), 'I think you will see the same sort of difference taken in all my former poems,—of which I would say, if it is fair for me to say anything, that the force in the Lay is thrown on style—in Marmion, on description—and in the Lady of the Lake, on incident.'[1] I suspect some of these distinctions may have been matters of afterthought; but as to Rokeby there can be no mistake. His own original conceptions of some of its principal characters have been explained in letters already cited; and I believe no one who compares the poem with his novels will doubt that, had he undertaken their portraiture in prose, they would have come forth with effect hardly inferior to any of all the groups he ever created. As it is, I question whether even in his prose there is anything more exquisitely wrought out, as well as fancied, than the whole contrast of the two rivals for the love of the heroine in Rokeby; and that heroine herself, too, has a very particular interest attached to her. Writing to Miss Edgeworth five years after this time (10th March 1818), he says, 'I have not read one of my poems since they were printed, excepting last year the Lady of the Lake, which I liked better than I expected, but not well enough to induce me to go through the rest—so I may truly say with Macbeth—

> I am afraid to think of what I've done—
> Look on't again I dare not.

This much of *Matilda* I recollect—(for that is not so easily forgotten)—that she was attempted for the existing person of a lady who is now no more, so that I am particularly flattered with your distinguishing it from the others, which are in general mere shadows.' I can have no doubt that the lady he here alludes to was the object of his own unfortunate first love; and as little, that in the romantic generosity, both of the youthful poet who fails to win her higher favour, and of his chivalrous competitor, we have before us something more than 'a mere shadow.'

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[1] Several letters to Ballantyne on the same subject are quoted in the notes to the last edition of Rokeby. See Scott's Poetical Works, 1834, vol. ix. pp. 1-3; and especially the note on p. 300, from which it appears that the closing stanza was added, in deference to Ballantyne and Erskine, though the author retained his own opinion that 'it spoiled one effect without producing another.'

In spite of these graceful characters, the inimitable scenery on which they are presented, and the splendid vivacity and thrilling interest of several chapters in the story—such as the opening interview of Bertram and Wycliff—the flight up the cliff on the Greta—the first entrance of the cave at Brignall—the firing of Rokeby Castle—and the catastrophe in Eglistone Abbey;—in spite certainly of exquisitely happy lines profusely scattered throughout the whole composition, and of some detached images—that of the setting of the tropical sun,[1] for example—which were never surpassed by any poet; in spite of all these merits, the immediate success of Rokeby was greatly inferior to that of the Lady of the Lake; nor has it ever since been so much a favourite with the public at large as any other of his poetical romances. He ascribes this failure, in his introduction of 1830, partly to the radically unpoetical character of the Round-heads; but surely their character has its poetical side also, had his prejudices allowed him to enter upon its study with impartial sympathy; and I doubt not, Mr. Morritt suggested the difficulty on this score, when the outline of the story was as yet undetermined, from consideration rather of the poet's peculiar feelings, and powers as hitherto exhibited, than of the subject absolutely. Partly he blames the satiety of the public ear, which had had so much of his rhythm, not only from himself, but from dozens of mocking-birds, male and female, all more or less applauded in their day, and now all equally forgotten.[1] This circumstance, too, had probably no slender effect; the more that, in defiance of all the hints of his friends, he now, in his narrative, repeated (with more negligence) the uniform octosyllabic couplets of the Lady of the Lake, instead of recurring to the more varied cadence of the Lay or Marmion. It is fair to add that, among the London circles at least, some sarcastic flings in Mr. Moore's 'Twopenny Post Bag' must have had an unfavourable influence on this occasion.[2] But the cause of failure which the poet himself places last, was unquestionably the main one. The deeper and darker passion of Childe Harold, the audacity of its morbid voluptuousness, and the melancholy majesty of the numbers in which it defied the world, had taken the general imagination by storm; and Rokeby, with many beauties and some sublimities, was pitched, as a whole, on a key which seemed tame in the comparison.

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[1] My noontide, India may declare;
Like her fierce sun, I fired the air!
Like him, to wood and cave bid fly
Her natives, from mine angry eye.
And now, my race of terror run,
Mine be the eve of tropic sun!
No pale gradations quench his ray,
No twilight dews his wrath allay;
With disk like battle-target red,
He rushes to his burning bed.
Dyes the wide wave with bloody light,
Then sinks at once—and all is night.—Canto vi. 21.

I have already adverted to the fact that Scott felt it a relief, not a fatigue, to compose the Bridal of Triermain *pari passu* with Rokeby. In answer, for example, to one of James Ballantyne's letters, urging accelerated speed with the weightier romance, he says, 'I fully share in your anxiety to get forward the grand work; but, I assure you, I feel the more confidence from coquetting with the guerilla.'

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[1] 'Scott found peculiar favour and imitation among the fair sex. There was Miss Holford, and Miss Mitford, and Miss Francis; but, with the greatest respect be it spoken, none of his imitators did much honour to the original except Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, until the appearance of "The Bridal of Triermain" and "Harold the Dauntless," which, in the opinion of some, equalled if not surpassed him; and, lo! after three or four years they turned out to be the master's own compositions.'—BYRON, vol. xv. p. 96.

[2] See, for instance, the Epistle of Lady Corke—or that of Messrs. Lackington, booksellers, to one of their dandy authors—

> 'Should you feel any touch of *poetical* glow,
> We've a scheme to suggest—Mr. Scott, you must know
> (Who, we're sorry to say it, now works for the *Row*),
> Having quitted the Borders to seek new renown,
> Is coming by long Quarto stages to town,
> And beginning with Rokeby (the job's sure to pay),
> Means to do all the gentlemen's seats on the way.
> Now the scheme is, though none of our hackneys can beat him,
> To start a new Poet through Highgate to meet him;
> Who by means of quick proofs—no revises—long coaches—
> May do a few Villas before Scott approaches;
> Indeed if our Pegasus be not curst shabby,
> He'll reach without foundering, at least Woburn-Abbey,' etc. etc.

The quarto of Rokeby was followed, within two months, by the small volume which had been designed for a twin-birth;—the MS. had been transcribed by one of the Ballantynes themselves, in order to guard against any indiscretion of the press-people; and the mystification, aided and abetted by Erskine, in no small degree heightened the interest of its reception. Except Mr. Morritt, Scott had, so far as I am aware, no English confidant upon this occasion. Whether any of his daily companions in the Parliament House were in the secret, I have never heard; but I can scarcely believe that any of those intimate friends, who had known him and Erskine from their youth upwards, could have for a moment believed the latter capable either of the invention or the execution of this airy and fascinating romance in little. Mr. Jeffrey, for whom chiefly 'the trap had been set,' was far too sagacious to be caught in it; but, as it happened, he made a voyage that year to America, and thus lost the opportunity of immediately expressing his opinion either of Rokeby or of the Bridal of Triermain. The writer in the Quarterly Review (July 1813) seems to have been completely deceived—'We have already spoken of it,' says the critic, 'as an imitation of Mr. Scott's style of composition; and if we are compelled to make the general approbation more precise and specific, we should say, that if it be inferior in vigour to some of his productions, it equals or surpasses them in elegance and beauty; that it is more uniformly tender, and far less infected with the unnatural prodigies and coarseness of the earlier romances. In estimating its merits, however, we should forget that it is offered as an imitation. The diction undoubtedly reminds us of a rhythm and cadence we have heard before; but the sentiments, descriptions, and characters have qualities that are native and unborrowed.'

If this writer was, as I suppose, Ellis, he probably considered it as a thing impossible that Scott should have engaged in such a scheme without giving him a hint of it; but to have admitted into the secret any one who was likely to criticise the piece, would have been to sacrifice the very object of the device. Erskine's own suggestion, that 'perhaps a quizzical review might be got up,' led, I believe, to nothing more important than a paragraph in one of the Edinburgh newspapers. He may be pardoned for having been not a little flattered to find it generally considered as not impossible that he should have written such a poem; and I have heard James Ballantyne say, that nothing could be more amusing than the style of his coquetting on the subject while it was yet fresh; but when this first excitement was over, his natural feeling of what was due to himself, as well as to his friend, dictated many a remonstrance; and, though he ultimately acquiesced in permitting another minor romance to be put forth in the same manner, he did so reluctantly, and was far from acting his part so well.

Scott says, in the Introduction to the Lord of the Isles, 'As Mr. Erskine was more than suspected of a taste for poetry, and as I took care, in several places, to mix something that might resemble (as far as was in my power) my friend's feeling and manner, the train easily caught, and two large editions were sold.' Among the passages to which he here alludes, are no doubt those in which the character of the minstrel Arthur is shaded with the colourings of an almost effeminate gentleness. Yet, in the midst of them, the 'mighty minstrel' himself, from time to time, escapes; as, for instance, where the lover bids Lucy, in that exquisite picture of crossing a mountain stream, trust to his 'stalwart arm'—

> Which could yon oak's prone trunk uprear.

Nor can I pass the compliment to Scott's own fair patroness, where Lucy's admirer is made to confess, with some momentary lapse of gallantry, that he

Ne'er won—best meed to minstrel true—
One favouring smile from fair Buccleuch;

nor the burst of genuine Borderism,—

Bewcastle now must keep the hold,
  Speir-Adam's steeds must bide in stall;
Of Hartley-burn the bowmen bold
  Must only shoot from battled wall;
And Liddesdale may buckle spur,
  And Teviot now may belt the brand,
Tarras and Ewes keep nightly stir,
  And Eskdale foray Cumberland.—

But, above all, the choice of the scenery, both of the Introductions and of the story itself, reveals the early and treasured predilections of the poet. For who that remembers the circumstances of his first visit to the vale of St. John, but must see throughout the impress of his own real romance? I own I am not without a suspicion that, in one passage, which always seemed to me a blot upon the composition—that in which Arthur derides the military coxcombries of his rival—

Who comes in foreign trashery
  Of tinkling chain and spur,
A walking haberdashery
  Of feathers, lace, and fur;
In Rowley's antiquated phrase,
Horse-milliner of modern days—

there is a sly reference to the incidents of a certain ball, of August 1797, at the Gilsland Spa.[1]

Among the more prominent Erskinisms are the eulogistic mention of Glasgow, the scene of Erskine's education; and the lines on Collins—a supplement to whose Ode on the Highland Superstitions is, as far as I know, the only specimen that ever was published of Erskine's verse.[2]

As a whole, the Bridal of Triermain appears to me as characteristic of Scott as any of his larger poems. His genius pervades and animates it beneath a thin and playful veil, which perhaps adds as much of grace as it takes away of splendour. As Wordsworth says of the eclipse on the lake of Lugano—

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[1] See *ante*, vol. i. p. 231.

[2] It is included in the Border Minstrelsy. Scott's Poetical Works, vol. i. p. 270.

'Tis sunlight sheathed and gently charmed ;

and I think there is at once a lightness and a polish of versification beyond what he has elsewhere attained. If it be a miniature, it is such a one as a Cooper might have hung fearlessly beside the masterpieces of Vandyke.

The Introductions contain some of the most exquisite passages he ever produced ; but their general effect has always struck me as unfortunate. No art can reconcile us to contemptuous satire of the merest frivolities of modern life—some of them already, in twenty years, grown obsolete—interlaid between such bright visions of the old world of romance, when

Strength was gigantic, valour high,
And wisdom soared beyond the sky,
And beauty had such matchless beam
As lights not now a lover's dream.

The fall is grievous, from the hoary minstrel of Newark, and his feverish tears on Killiecrankie, to a pathetic swain, who can stoop to denounce as objects of his jealousy

The landaulet and four blood bays—
The Hessian boot and pantaloon.

Before Triermain came out, Scott had taken wing for Abbotsford ; and indeed he seems to have so contrived it in his earlier period that he should not be in Edinburgh when any unavowed work of his was published ; whereas, from the first, in the case of books that bore his name on the title-page, he walked as usual to the Parliament House, and bore all the buzz and tattle of friends and acquaintance with an air of good-humoured equanimity, or rather total apparent indifference. The following letter, which contains some curious matter of more kinds than one, was written partly in town and partly in the country :—

'*To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.*

'EDINBURGH, *March 13th*, 1813.

'MY DEAREST FRIEND—The pinasters have arrived safe, and I can hardly regret, while I am so much flattered by, the trouble you have had in collecting them. I have got some wild larch trees from Loch Katrine, and both are to be planted next week, when, God willing, I shall be at Abbotsford to superintend the operation. I have got a little corner of ground laid out for a nursery, where I shall rear them carefully till they are old enough to be set forth to push their fortune on the banks of Tweed.—What I shall finally make of this villa-work I don't know, but in the meantime it is very entertaining. I shall have to resist very flattering invitations this season; for I have received hints, from more quarters than one, that my bow would be acceptable at Carlton House in case I should be in London, which is very flattering, especially as there were some prejudices to be got over in that quarter. I should be in some danger of giving new offence, too; for, although I utterly disapprove of the present rash and ill-advised course of the princess, yet, as she always was most kind and civil to me, I certainly could not, as a gentleman, decline obeying any commands she might give me to wait upon her, especially in her present adversity. So, though I do not affect to say I should be sorry to take an opportunity of peeping at the splendours of royalty, prudence and economy will keep me quietly at home till another day. My great amusement here this some time past has been going almost nightly to see John Kemble, who certainly is a great artist. It is a pity he shows too much of his machinery. I wish he could be double-capped, as they say of watches;—but the fault of too much study certainly does not belong to many of his tribe. He is, I think, very great in those parts especially where character is tinged by some acquired and systematic habits, like those of the Stoic philosophy in Cato and Brutus, or of misanthropy in Penruddock: but sudden turns and natural bursts of passion are not his forte. I saw him play Sir Giles Overreach (the Richard III. of middling life) last night; but he came not within a hundred miles of Cooke, whose terrible visage, and short, abrupt, and savage utterance, gave a reality almost to that extraordinary scene in which he boasts of his own successful villany to a nobleman of worth and honour, of whose alliance he is ambitious. Cooke contrived somehow to impress upon the audience the idea of such a monster of enormity as had learned to pique himself even upon his own atrocious character. But Kemble was too handsome, too plausible, and too smooth, to admit its being probable that he should be blind to the unfavourable impression which these extraordinary vaunts are likely to make on the person whom he is so anxious to conciliate.

'ABBOTSFORD, 21*st March.*

'This letter, begun in Edinburgh, is to take wing from Abbotsford. John Winnos (now John Winnos is the sub-oracle of Abbotsford, the principal being Tom Purdie)—John Winnos pronounces that the pinaster seed ought to be raised at first on a hot-bed, and thence transplanted to a nursery : so to a hot-bed they have been carefully consigned, the upper oracle not objecting, in respect his talent lies in catching a salmon, or finding a hare sitting—on which occasions (being a very complete Scrub) he solemnly exchanges his working jacket for an old green one of mine, and takes the air of one of Robin Hood's followers. His more serious employments are ploughing, harrowing, and overseeing all my premises ; being a complete jack-of-all-trades, from the carpenter to the shepherd, nothing comes strange to him ; and being extremely honest, and somewhat of a humourist, he is quite my right hand. I cannot help singing his praises at this moment, because I have so many odd and out-of-the-way things to do, that I believe the conscience of many of our jog-trot countrymen would revolt at being made my instrument in sacrificing good corn-land to the visions of Mr. Price's theory. Mr. Pinkerton, the historian, has a play coming out at

Edinburgh; it is by no means bad poetry, yet I think it will not be popular; the people come and go, and speak very notable things in good blank verse, but there is no very strong interest excited: the plot also is disagreeable, and liable to the objections (though in a less degree) which have been urged against the Mysterious Mother: it is to be acted on Wednesday; I will let you know its fate. P., with whom I am in good habits, showed the MS., but I referred him, with such praise as I could conscientiously bestow, to the players and the public. I don't know why one should take the task of damning a man's play out of the hands of the proper tribunal. Adieu, my dear friend. I have scarce room for love to Miss, Mrs., and Dr. B.

'W. Scott.'

To this I add a letter to Lady Louisa Stuart, who had sent him a copy of these lines, found by Lady Douglas on the back of a tattered bank-note—

Farewell, my note, and wheresoe'er ye wend,
Shun gaudy scenes, and be the poor man's friend.
You've left a poor one; go to one as poor,
And drive despair and hunger from his door.

It appears that these noble friends had adopted, or feigned to adopt, the belief that the Bridal of Triermain was a production of Mr. R. P. Gillies—who had about this time published an imitation of Lord Byron's *Romaunt*, under the title of 'Childe Alarique.'

'*To the Lady Louisa Stuart, Bothwell Castle.*

'Abbotsford, 28*th April* 1813.

'Dear Lady Louisa—Nothing can give me more pleasure than to hear from you, because it is both a most acceptable favour to me, and also a sign that your own spirits are recovering their tone. Ladies are, I think, very fortunate in having a resource in work at a time when the mind rejects intellectual amusement. Men have no resource but striding up and down the room, like a bird that beats itself to pieces against the bars of its cage; whereas needlework is a sort of sedative, too mechanical to worry the mind by distracting it from the points on which its musings turn, yet gradually assisting it in regaining steadiness and composure; for so curiously are our bodies and minds linked together, that the regular and constant employment of the former on any process, however dull and uniform, has the effect of tranquillizing, where it cannot disarm, the feelings of the other. I am very much pleased with the lines on the guinea note, and if Lady Douglas does not object, I would willingly mention the circumstance in the Edinburgh Annual Register. I think it will give the author great delight to know that his lines had attracted attention, and *had* sent the paper on which they were recorded, "heaven-directed, to the poor." Of course I would mention no names. There was, as your Ladyship may remember, some years since, a most audacious and determined murder committed on a porter belonging to the British Linen Company's Bank at Leith, who was stabbed to the heart in broad daylight, and robbed of a large sum in notes.[1] If ever this crime comes to light, it will be through the circumstance of an idle young fellow having written part of a playhouse song on one of the notes, which, however, has as yet never appeared in circulation.

'I am very glad you like Rokeby, which is nearly out of fashion and memory with me. It has been wonderfully popular, about ten thousand copies having walked off already, in about three months, and the demand continuing faster than it can be supplied. As to my imitator, the Knight of Triermain, I will endeavour to convey to Mr. Gillies (*puisque Gillies il est*) your Ladyship's very just strictures on the Introduction to the second Canto. But if he takes the opinion of a hacked old author like myself, he will content himself with avoiding such bevues in future, without attempting to mend those which are already made. There is an ominous old proverb which says, *confess and be hanged;* and truly if an author acknowledges his own blunders, I do not know who he can expect to stand by him; whereas, let him confess nothing, and he will always find some injudicious admirers to vindicate even his faults. So that I think after publication the effect of criticism should be prospective, in which point of view I daresay Mr. G. will take your friendly hint, especially as it is confirmed by that of the best judges who have read the poem.—Here is beautiful weather for April! An absolute snow-storm mortifying me to the core by retarding the growth of all my young trees and shrubs.—Charlotte begs to be most respectfully remembered to your Ladyship and Lady D. We are realizing the nursery tale of the man and his wife who lived in a vinegar bottle, for our only sitting-room is just twelve feet square, and my Eve alleges that I am too big for our paradise. To make amends, I have created a tolerable garden, occupying about an English acre, which I begin to be very fond of. When one passes forty, an addition to the quiet occupations of life becomes of real value, for I do not hunt and fish with quite the relish I did ten years ago. Adieu, my dear Lady Louisa, and all good attend you. WALTER SCOTT.'

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[1] This murder, perpetrated in November 1806, remains a mystery in 1836. The porter's name was Begbie.

CHAPTER XXVI

Affairs of John Ballantyne and Co.—Causes of their derangement—Letters of Scott to his Partners—Negotiation for relief with Messrs. Constable—New purchase of Land at Abbotsford—Embarrassments continued—John Ballantyne's Expresses—Drumlanrig—Penrith, etc.—Scott's meeting with the Marquis of Abercorn at Longtown—His application to the Duke of Buccleuch—Offer of the Poet-Laureateship—considered—and declined—Address of the City of Edinburgh to the Prince Regent—its reception—Civic Honours conferred on Scott—Question of Taxation on Literary Income—Letters to Mr. Morritt—Mr. Southey—Mr. Richardson—Mr. Crabbe—Miss Baillie and Lord Byron.

1813

About a month after the publication of the Bridal of Triermain, the affairs of the Messrs. Ballantyne, which had never apparently been in good order since the establishment of the bookselling firm, became so embarrassed as to call for Scott's most anxious efforts to disentangle them. Indeed, it is clear that there had existed some very serious perplexity in the course of the preceding autumn; for Scott writes to John Ballantyne, while Rokeby was in progress (August 11, 1812)—'I have a letter from James, very anxious about your health and state of spirits. If you suffer the present inconveniences to depress you too much, you are wrong; and if you conceal any part of them, are very unjust to us all. I am always ready to make any sacrifices to do justice to engagements, and would rather sell anything, or everything, than be less than true men to the world.'

I have already, perhaps, said enough to account for the general want of success in this publishing adventure; but Mr. James Ballantyne sums up the case so briefly in his death-bed paper, that I may here quote his words. 'My brother,' he says, 'though an active and pushing, was not a cautious bookseller, and the large sums received never formed an addition to stock. In fact they were all expended by the partners, who being then young and sanguine men, not unwillingly adopted my brother's hasty results. By May 1813, in a word, the absolute throwing away of our own most valuable publications, and the rash adoption of some injudicious speculations of Mr. Scott, had introduced such losses and embarrassments, that after a very careful consideration, Mr. Scott determined to dissolve the concern.' He adds,—'This became a matter of less difficulty, because time had in a great measure worn away the differences between Mr. Scott and Mr. Constable, and Mr. Hunter was now out of Constable's concern.[1] A peace, therefore, was speedily made up, and the old habits of intercourse were restored.'

How reluctantly Scott had made up his mind to open such a negotiation with Constable, as involved a complete exposure of the mismanagement of John Ballantyne's business as a publisher, will appear from a letter dated about the Christmas of 1812, in which he says to James, who had proposed asking Constable to take a share both in Rokeby and in the Annual Register, 'You must be aware, that in stating the objections which occur to me to taking in Constable, I think they ought to give way either to absolute necessity or to very strong grounds of advantage. But I *am* persuaded nothing ultimately good can be expected from any connexion with that house, unless for those who have a mind to be hewers of wood and drawers of water. We will talk the matter coolly over, and in the meanwhile, perhaps you could see W. Erskine, and learn what impression this odd union is like to make among your friends. Erskine is sound-headed, and quite to be trusted with *your whole story*. I must own I can hardly think the purchase of the Register is equal to the loss of credit and character which your surrender will be conceived to infer.' At the time when he wrote this, Scott no doubt anticipated that Rokeby would have success not less decisive than the Lady of the Lake; but in this expectation—though 10,000 copies in three months would have seemed to any other author a triumphant sale—he had been disappointed. And meanwhile the difficulties of the firm accumulating from week to week, had reached by the middle of May, a point which rendered it absolutely necessary for him to conquer all his scruples.

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[1] Mr. Hunter died in March 1812.

Mr. Cadell, then Constable's partner, says in his *Memoranda*,—'Prior to this time the reputation of John Ballantyne and Co. had been decidedly on the decline. It was notorious in the trade that their general speculations had been unsuccessful; they were known to be grievously in want of money. These rumours were realized to the full by an application which Messrs. B. made to Mr. Constable in May 1813, for pecuniary aid, accompanied by an offer of some of the books they had published since 1809, as a purchase, along with various shares in Mr. Scott's own poems. Their difficulties were admitted, and the negotiation was pressed urgently; so much so, that a pledge was given, that if the terms asked were acceded to, John Ballantyne and Co. would endeavour to wind up their concerns, and cease as soon as possible to be publishers.' Mr. Cadell adds:—'I need hardly remind you that this was a period of very great general difficulty in the money market. It was the crisis of the war. The public expenditure had reached an enormous height; and even the most prosperous mercantile houses were often pinched to sustain their credit. It may easily, therefore, be supposed that the Messrs. Ballantyne had during many months besieged every banker's door in Edinburgh, and that their agents had done the like in London.'

The most important of the requests which the labouring house made to Constable was, that he should forthwith take entirely to himself the stock, copyright, and future management of the Edinburgh Annual Register. Upon examining the state of this book, however, Constable found that the loss on it had never been less than £1000 per annum, and he therefore declined that matter for the present. He promised, however, to consider seriously the means he might have of ultimately relieving them from the pressure of the Register, and, in the meantime, offered to take 300 sets of the stock on hand. The other purchases he finally made on the 18th of May, were considerable portions of Weber's unhappy Beaumont and Fletcher—of an edition of De Foe's novels in twelve volumes—of a collection entitled Tales of the East in three large volumes, 8vo, double columned—and of another in one volume, called Popular Tales—about 800 copies of the Vision of Don Roderick—and a fourth of the remaining copyright of Rokeby, price £700. The immediate accommodation thus received amounted to £2000; and Scott, who had personally conducted the latter part of the negotiation, writes thus to his junior partner, who had gone a week or two earlier to London in quest of some similar assistance there :—

'*To Mr. John Ballantyne, care of Messrs. Longman & Co., London.*

'PRINTING-OFFICE, *May 18th*, 1813.

'DEAR JOHN—After many *offs* and *ons*, and as many *projets* and *contre-projets* as the treaty of Amiens, I have at length concluded a treaty with Constable, in which I am sensible he has gained a great advantage;[1] but what could I do amidst the disorder and pressure of so many demands? The arrival of your long-dated bills decided my giving in, for what could James or I do with them?

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[1] 'These and after-purchases of books from the stock of J. Ballantyne and Co. were resold to the trade by Constable's firm, at less than one-half and one-third of the prices at which they were thus obtained.'—*Note from Mr. R. Cadell.*

I trust this sacrifice has cleared our way, but many rubs remain; nor am I, after these hard skirmishes, so able to meet them by my proper credit. Constable, however, will be a zealous ally; and for the first time these many weeks I shall lay my head on a quiet pillow, for now I do think that, by our joint exertions, we shall get well through the storm, save Beaumont from depreciation, get a partner in our heavy concerns, reef our topsails, and move on securely under an easy sail. And if, on the one hand, I have sold my gold too cheap, I have, on the other, turned my lead to gold. Brewster[1] and Singers[2] are the only heavy things to which I have not given a blue eye. Had your news of Cadell's sale[3] reached us here, I could not have harpooned my grampus so deeply as I have done, as nothing but Rokeby would have barbed the hook.

'Adieu, my dear John. I have the most sincere regard for you, and you may depend on my considering your interest with quite as much attention as my own. If I have ever expressed myself with irritation in speaking of this business, you must impute it to the sudden, extensive, and unexpected embarrassments in which I found myself involved all at once. If to your real goodness of heart and integrity, and to the quickness and acuteness of your talents, you added habits of more universal circumspection, and, above all, the courage to tell disagreeable truths to those whom you hold in regard, I pronounce that the world never held such a man of business. These it must be your study to add to your other good qualities. Meantime, as some one says to Swift, I love you with all your failings. Pray make an effort and love me with all mine.—Yours truly,

'W. S.'

Three days afterwards, Scott resumes the subject as follows:—

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[1] Dr. Brewster's edition of Ferguson's Astronomy, 2 vols. 8vo, with plates, 4to, Edin. 1811. 36s.

[2] Dr. Singers' General View of the County of Dumfries, 8vo, Edin. 1812. 18s.

[3] A trade sale of Messrs. Cadell and Davies in the Strand.

'*To Mr. John Ballantyne, London.*

'EDINBURGH, 21*st May* 1813.

'DEAR JOHN—Let it never escape your recollection, that shutting your own eyes, or blinding those of your friends, upon the actual state of business, is the high road to ruin. Meanwhile, we have recovered our legs for a week or two. Constable will, I think, come in to the Register. He is most anxious to maintain the printing-office; he sees most truly that the more we print the less we publish; and for the same reason he will, I think, help us off with our heavy quire-stock.

'I was aware of the distinction between the *state* and the *calendar* as to the latter including the printing-office bills, and I summed and docked them (they are marked with red ink), but there is still a difference of £2000 and upwards on the calendar against the business. I sometimes fear that, between the long dates of your bills, and the tardy settlements of the Edinburgh trade, some difficulties will occur even in June; and July I always regard with deep anxiety. As for loss, if I get out without public exposure, I shall not greatly regard the rest. Radcliffe the physician said, when he lost £2000 on the South-Sea scheme, it was only going up 2000 pair of stairs; I say, it is only writing 2000 couplets, and the account is balanced. More of this hereafter.—Yours truly,

'W. SCOTT.

'*P.S.*—James has behaved very well during this whole transaction, and has been most steadily attentive to business. I am convinced that the more he works the better his health will be. One or other of you will need to be constantly in the printing-office henceforward—it is the sheet-anchor.'

The allusion in this *postscript* to James Ballantyne's health reminds me that Scott's letters to himself are full of hints on that subject, even from a very early period of their connexion; and these hints are all to the same effect. James was a man of lazy habits, and not a little addicted to the more solid, and perhaps more dangerous, part of the indulgences of the table. One letter (dated Ashestiel, 1810) will be a sufficient specimen:—

'*To Mr. James Ballantyne.*

'MY DEAR JAMES—I am very sorry for the state of your health, and should be still more so, were I not certain that I can prescribe for you as well as any physician in Edinburgh. You have naturally an athletic constitution and a hearty stomach, and these agree very ill with a sedentary life and the habits of indolence which it brings on. Your stomach thus gets weak; and from those complaints of all others arise most certainly flatulence, hypochondria, and all the train of unpleasant feelings connected with indigestion. We all know the horrible sensation of the nightmare arises from the same cause which gives those waking nightmares commonly called the blue devils. You must positively put yourself on a regimen as to eating, not for a month or two, but for a year at least, and take regular exercise—and my life for yours. I know this by myself, for if I were to eat and drink in town as I do here, it would soon finish me, and yet I am sensible I live too genially in Edinburgh as it is.—Yours very truly, W. SCOTT.'

Among Scott's early pets at Abbotsford there was a huge raven, whose powers of speech were remarkable, far beyond any parrot's that he had ever met with; and who died in consequence of an excess of the kind to which James Ballantyne was addicted. Thenceforth, Scott often repeated to his old friend, and occasionally scribbled by way of postscript to his notes on business—

When you are craving,
Remember the Raven.

Sometimes the formula is varied to—

When you've dined half,
Think on poor Ralph!

His preachments of regularity in book-keeping to John, and of abstinence from good cheer to James Ballantyne, were equally vain; but on the other hand it must be allowed that they had some reason for displeasure—(the more felt because they durst not, like him, express their feelings)[1]—when they found that scarcely had these 'hard skirmishes' terminated in the bargain of May 18th, before Scott was preparing fresh embarrassments for himself, by commencing a negotiation for a considerable addition to his property at Abbotsford. As early as the 20th of June he writes to Constable as being already aware of this matter, and alleges his anxiety 'to close at once with a very capricious person,' as the only reason that could have induced him to make up his mind to sell the whole copyright of an as yet unwritten poem, to be entitled 'The Nameless Glen.' This copyright he then offered to dispose of to Constable for £5000; adding, 'this is considerably less in proportion than I have already made on the share of Rokeby sold to yourself, and surely that is no unfair admeasurement.' A long correspondence ensued, in the course of which Scott mentions 'The Lord of the Isles,' as a title which had suggested itself to him in place of 'The Nameless Glen'; but as the negotiation did not succeed, I may pass its details. The new property which Scott was so eager to acquire was that hilly tract stretching from the old Roman road near Turn-again towards the Cauldshiels Loch: a then desolate and naked mountain-mere, which he likens, in a letter of this summer (to Lady Louisa Stuart), to the Lake of the Genie and the Fisherman in the Arabian Tale. To obtain this lake at one extremity of his estate, as a contrast to the Tweed at the other, was a prospect for which hardly any sacrifice would have appeared too much; and he contrived to gratify his wishes in the course of that July, to which he had spoken of himself in May as looking forward 'with the deepest anxiety.'

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[1] Since this work was first published, I have been compelled to examine very minutely the details of Scott's connexion with the Ballantynes, and one result is, that both James and John had trespassed so largely, for their private purposes, on the funds of the Companies, that, Scott being, as their letters distinctly state, the only 'monied partner,' and his over-advances of capital having been very extensive, any inquiry on their part as to his uncommercial expenditure must have been entirely out of the question. To avoid misrepresentation, however, I leave my text as it was.—[1839.]

Nor was he, I must add, more able to control some of his minor tastes. I find him writing to Mr. Terry, on the 20th of June, about 'that splendid lot of ancient armour, advertised by Winstanley,' a celebrated auctioneer in London, of which he had the strongest fancy to make his spoil, though he was at a loss to know where it should be placed when it reached Abbotsford; and on the 2nd of July, this acquisition also having been settled, he says to the same correspondent—'I have written to Mr. Winstanley. My bargain with Constable was otherwise arranged, but Little John is to find the needful article, and I shall take care of Mr. Winstanley's interest, who has behaved too handsomely in this matter to be trusted to the mercy of our little friend the Picaroon, who is, notwithstanding his many excellent qualities, a little on the score of old Gobbo—doth somewhat smack—somewhat grow to.[1] We shall be at Abbotsford on the 12th, and hope soon to see you there. I am fitting up a small room above *Peter-house*, where an unceremonious bachelor may consent to do penance, though the place is a cock-loft, and the access that which leads many a bold fellow to his last nap—a ladder.'[2] And a few weeks later, he says, in the same sort, to his sister-in-law, Mrs. Thomas Scott —'In despite of these hard times, which affect my patrons

[1] Merchant of Venice, Act II. Scene 2.

[2] The court of offices, built on the *haugh* at Abbotsford in 1812, included a house for the faithful coachman, Peter Mathieson. One of Scott's Cantabrigian friends, Mr. W. S. Rose, gave the whole pile soon afterwards the name, which it retained to the end, of *Peter-house*. The loft at Peter-house continued to be occupied by occasional bachelor guests until the existing mansion was completed.

the booksellers very much, I am buying old books and old armour as usual, and adding to what your old friend[1] Burns calls—

> A fouth of auld nick-nackets,
> Rusty airn caps and jingling jackets,
> Wad haud the Lothians three in tackets
> A towmont gude,
> And parritch-pats and auld saut-backets,
> Before the flude.

Notwithstanding all this, it must have been with a most uneasy mind that he left Edinburgh to establish himself at Abbotsford that July. The assistance of Constable had not been granted, indeed it had not been asked, to an extent at all adequate for the difficulties of the case; and I have now to transcribe, with pain and reluctance, some extracts from Scott's letters, during the ensuing autumn, which speak the language of anxious, and indeed humiliating distress; and give a most lively notion of the incurable recklessness of his younger partner.

'*To Mr. John Ballantyne.*

'ABBOTSFORD, *Saturday, 24th July.*

'DEAR JOHN—I sent you the order, and have only to hope it arrived safe and in good time. I waked the boy at three o'clock myself, having slept little, less on account of the money than of the time. Surely you should have written, three or four days before, the probable amount of the deficit, and, as on former occasions, I would have furnished you with means of meeting it. These expresses, besides every other inconvenience, excite surprise in my family and in the neighbourhood. I know no justifiable occasion for them but the unexpected return of a bill. I do not consider you as answerable for the success of plans, but I do and must hold you responsible for giving me, in distinct and plain terms, your opinion as to any difficulties which may occur, and that in such time that I may make arrangements to obviate them if possible.

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[1] Mrs. Thomas Scott had met Burns frequently in early life at Dumfries. Her brother, the late Mr. David MacCulloch, was a great favourite with the poet, and the best singer of his songs that I ever heard.

'Of course if anything has gone wrong you will come out here to-morrow. But if, as I hope and trust, the cash arrived safe, you will write to me, under cover to the Duke of Buccleuch, Drumlanrig Castle, Dumfriesshire. I shall set out for that place on Monday morning early.

'W. S.'

'*To Mr. James Ballantyne.*

'ABBOTSFORD, 25*th July* 1813.

'DEAR JAMES—I address the following jobation for John to you, that you may see whether I do not well to be angry, and enforce upon him the necessity of constantly writing his fears as well as his hopes. You should rub him often on this point, for his recollection becomes rusty the instant I leave town and am not in the way to rack him with constant questions. I hope the presses are doing well, and that you are quite stout again.—Yours truly.

'W. S.'

(ENCLOSURE.)

'*To Mr. John Ballantyne.*

'MY GOOD FRIEND JOHN—The post brings me no letter from you, which I am much surprised at, as you must suppose me anxious to learn that your express arrived. I think he must have reached you before post-hours, and James or you *might* have found a minute to say so in a single line. I once more request that you will be a business-like correspondent, and state your provisions for every week prospectively. I do not expect you to *warrant them*, which you rather perversely seem to insist is my wish, but I do want to be aware of their nature and extent, that I may provide against the possibility of miscarriage. The calendar, to which you refer me, tells me what sums are due, but cannot tell your shifts to pay them, which are naturally altering with circumstances, and of which alterations I request to have due notice. You say you *could not suppose* Sir W. Forbes would have refused the long dated bills; but that you *had* such an apprehension is clear, both because in the calendar these bills were rated two months lower, and because, three days before, you wrote me an enigmatical expression of your apprehensions, instead of saying plainly there was a chance of your wanting £350, when I would have sent you an order to be used conditionally.

'All I desire is unlimited confidence and frequent correspondence, and that you will give me weekly at least the fullest anticipation of your resources, and the probability of their being effectual. I may be disappointed in my own, of which you shall have equally timeous notice. Omit no exertions to procure the use of money, even for a month or six weeks, for time is most precious. The large balance due in January from the trade, and individuals, which I cannot reckon at less than £4000, will put us finally to rights; and it will be a shame to founder within sight of harbour. The greatest risk we run is from such ill-considered despatches as those of Friday. Suppose that I had gone to Drumlanrig—suppose the pony had set up—suppose a thousand things—and we were ruined for want of your telling your apprehensions in due time. Do not plague yourself to vindicate this sort of management; but if you have escaped the consequences (as to which you have left me uncertain), thank God, and act more cautiously another time. It was quite the same to me on what day I sent that draft; indeed it must have been so if I had the money in my cash account, and if I had not, the more time given me to provide it the better.

'Now, do not affect to suppose that my displeasure arises from your not having done your utmost to realize funds, and that utmost having failed. It is one mode, to be sure, of exculpation, to suppose one's self accused of something they are not charged with, and then to make a querulous or indignant defence, and complain of the injustice of the accuser. The head and front of your offending is precisely your not writing explicitly, and I request this may not happen again. It is your fault, and I believe arises either from an ill-judged idea of smoothing matters to me—as if I were not behind the curtain—or a general reluctance to allow that any danger is near, until it is almost unparryable. I shall be very sorry if anything I have said gives you pain; but the matter is too serious for all of us, to be passed over without giving you my explicit sentiments. To-morrow I set out for Drumlanrig, and shall not hear from you till Tuesday or Wednesday. Make yourself master of the post-town—Thornhill, probably, or Sanquhar. As Sir W. F. & Co. have cash to meet my order, nothing, I think, can have gone wrong, unless the boy perished by the way. Therefore, in faith and hope, and—that I may lack none of the Christian virtues—in charity with your dilatory worship, I remain very truly yours, W. S.'

Scott proceeded, accordingly, to join a gay and festive circle, whom the Duke of Buccleuch had assembled about him on first taking possession of the magnificent Castle of Drumlanrig, in Nithsdale, the principal messuage of the dukedom of Queensberry, which had recently lapsed into his family. But, *post equitem sedet atra cura*—another of John Ballantyne's unwelcome missives, rendered necessary by a neglect of precisely the same kind as before, reached him in the midst of this scene of rejoicing. On the 31st he again writes:—

'*To Mr. John Ballantyne, Bookseller, Edinburgh.*

'DRUMLANRIG, *Friday.*

'DEAR JOHN—I enclose the order. Unfortunately, the Drumlanrig post only goes thrice a week; but the Marquis of Queensberry, who carries this to Dumfries, has promised that the guard of the mail-coach shall deliver it by five to-morrow. I was less anxious, as your note said you could clear this month. It is a cruel thing, that no State you furnish excludes the arising of such unexpected claims as this for the taxes on the printing-office. What unhappy management, to suffer them to run ahead in such a manner!—but it is in vain to complain. Were it not for your strange concealments, I should anticipate no difficulty in winding up these matters. But who can reckon upon a State where claims are kept out of view until they are in the hands of a *writer?* If you have no time to say that *this* comes safe to hand, I suppose James may favour me so far.—Yours truly, W. S.

'Let the guard be rewarded.

'Let me know exactly what you *can* do and *hope* to do for next month; for it signifies nothing raising money for you, unless I see it is to be of real service. Observe, I make you responsible for nothing but a fair statement.[1] The guard is known to the Marquis, who has good-naturedly promised to give him this letter with his own hand; so it must reach you in time, though probably past five on Saturday.'

Another similar application reached Scott the day after the guard delivered his packet. He writes thus, in reply:—

'*To Mr. John Ballantyne.*

'DRUMLANRIG, *Sunday*.

'DEAR JOHN—I trust you got my letter yesterday by five, with the draft enclosed. I return your draft accepted. On Wednesday I think of leaving this place, where, but for these damned affairs, I should have been very happy. W. S.'

Scott had been for some time under an engagement to meet the Marquis of Abercorn at Carlisle, in the first week of August, for the transaction of some business connected with his brother Thomas's late administration of that nobleman's Scottish affairs; and he had designed to pass from Drumlanrig to Carlisle for this purpose, without going back to Abbotsford. In consequence of these repeated harassments, however, he so far altered his plans as to cut short his stay at Drumlanrig, and turn homewards for two or three days, where James Ballantyne met him with such a statement as in some measure relieved his mind.

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[1] John Ballantyne had embarked no capital—not a shilling—in the business; and was bound by the contract to limit himself to an allowance of £300 a year, in consideration of his *management*, until there should be an overplus of profits!—[1839.]

He then proceeded to fulfil his engagement with Lord Abercorn, whom he encountered travelling in a rather peculiar style between Carlisle and Longtown. The ladies of the family and the household occupied four or five carriages, all drawn by the Marquis's own horses, while the noble Lord himself brought up the rear, mounted on horseback, and decorated with the ribbon of the order of the Garter. On meeting the cavalcade, Scott turned with them, and he was not a little amused when they reached the village of Longtown, which he had ridden through an hour or two before, with the preparations which he found there made for the dinner of the party. The Marquis's major-domo and cook had arrived there at an early hour in the morning, and everything was now arranged for his reception in the paltry little public-house, as nearly as possible in the style usual in his own lordly mansions. The ducks and geese that had been dabbling three or four hours ago in the village-pond were now ready to make their appearance under numberless disguises as *entrées;* a regular bill-of-fare flanked the noble Marquis's allotted cover; every huckaback towel in the place had been pressed to do service as a napkin; and, that nothing might be wanting to the mimicry of splendour, the landlady's poor remnants of crockery and pewter had been furbished up, and mustered in solemn order on a crazy old beauffet, which was to represent a sideboard worthy of Lucullus. I think it worth while to preserve this anecdote, which Scott delighted in telling, as perhaps the last relic of a style of manners now passed away, and never likely to be revived among us.

Having despatched this dinner and his business, Scott again turned southwards, intending to spend a few days with Mr. Morritt at Rokeby; but on reaching Penrith, the landlord there, who was his old acquaintance (Mr. Buchanan), placed a letter in his hands: *ecce iterum*—it was once more a cry of distress from John Ballantyne. He thus answered it:—

'*To Mr. John Ballantyne.*

'PENRITH, *Aug.* 10, 1813.

'DEAR JOHN—I enclose you an order for £350. I shall remain at Rokeby until Saturday or Sunday, and be at Abbotsford on Wednesday at latest.

'I hope the printing-office is going on well. I fear, from the state of accompts between the companies, restrictions on the management and expense will be unavoidable, which may trench upon James's comforts. I cannot observe hitherto that the printing-office is paying off, but rather adding to its embarrassments; and it cannot be thought that I have either means or inclination to support a losing concern at the rate of £200 a month. If James could find a monied partner, an active man who understood the commercial part of the business, and would superintend the conduct of the cash, it might be the best for all parties; for I really am not adequate to the fatigue of mind which these affairs occasion me, though I must do the best to struggle through them.—Believe me yours, etc. W. S.'

At Brough he encountered a messenger who brought him such a painful account of Mrs. Morritt's health, that he abandoned his intention of proceeding to Rokeby; and, indeed, it was much better that he should be at Abbotsford again as soon as possible, for his correspondence shows a continued succession, during the three or four ensuing weeks, of the same annoyances that had pursued him to Drumlanrig and to Penrith. By his desire, the Ballantynes had, it would seem, before the middle of August, laid a statement of their affairs before Constable. Though the statement was not so clear and full as Scott had wished it to be, Constable, on considering it, at once assured them that to go on raising money in driblets would never effectually relieve them; that, in short, one or both of the companies must stop, unless Mr. Scott could find means to lay his hand, without farther delay, on at least £4000; and I gather that, by way of inducing Constable himself to come forward with part at least of this supply, John Ballantyne again announced his intention of forthwith abandoning the bookselling business altogether, and making an effort to establish himself—on a plan which Constable had shortly before suggested—as an auctioneer in Edinburgh. The following letters need no comment:—

'*To Mr. John Ballantyne.*

'ABBOTSFORD, *Aug.* 16, 1813.

'DEAR JOHN—I am quite satisfied it is impossible for J. B. and Co. to continue business longer than is absolutely necessary for the sale of stock and extrication of their affairs. The fatal injury which their credit has sustained, as well as your adopting a profession in which I sincerely hope you will be more fortunate, renders the closing of the bookselling business inevitable. With regard to the printing, it is my intention to retire from that also so soon as I can possibly do so with safety to myself, and with the regard I shall always entertain for James's interest. Whatever loss I may sustain will be preferable to the life I have lately led, when I seem surrounded by a sort of magic circle, which neither permits me to remain at home in peace, nor to stir abroad with pleasure. Your first exertion as an auctioneer may probably be on "that distinguished, select, and inimitable collection of books, made by an amateur of this city retiring from business." I do not feel either health or confidence in my own powers sufficient to authorize me to take a long price for a new poem, until these affairs shall have been in some measure digested. This idea has been long running in my head, but the late fatalities which have attended this business have quite decided my resolution. I will write to James to-morrow, being at present annoyed with a severe headache.—Yours truly,

'W. Scott.'

Were I to transcribe all the letters to which these troubles gave rise, I should fill a volume before I had reached the end of another twelvemonth. The two next I shall quote are dated on the same day (the 24th August), which may, in consequence of the answer the second of them received, be set down as determining the *crisis* of 1813.

'*To Mr. James Ballantyne.*

'Abbotsford, 24*th August* 1813.

'Dear James—Mr. Constable's advice is, as I have always found it, sound, sensible, and friendly—and I shall be guided by it. But I have no wealthy friend who would join in security with me to such an extent; and to apply in quarters where I might be refused, would ensure disclosure. I conclude John has shown Mr. C. the state of the affairs; if not, I would wish him to do so directly. If the proposed accommodation could be granted to the firm on my personally joining in the security, the whole matter would be quite safe, for I have to receive in the course of the winter some large sums from my father's estate.[1] Besides which, I shall certainly be able to go to press in November with a new poem; or, if Mr. Constable's additional security would please the bankers better, I could ensure Mr. C. against the possibility of loss, by assigning the copyrights, together with that of the new poem, or even my library, in his relief. In fact, if he looks into the affairs, he will I think see that there is no prospect of any eventual loss to the creditors, though I may be a loser myself. My property here is unincumbered; so is my house in Castle Street; and I have no debts out of my own family, excepting a part of the price of Abbotsford, which I am to retain for four years. So that, literally, I have no claims upon me unless those arising out of this business; and when it is considered that my income is above £2000 a year, even if the printing-office pays nothing, I should hope no one can possibly be a loser by me. I am sure I would strip myself to my shirt rather than it should be the case; and my only reason for wishing to stop the concern was to do open justice to all persons. It must have been a bitter pill to me. I can more confidently expect some aid from Mr. Constable, or from Longman's house, because they can look into the concern and satisfy themselves how little chance there is of their being losers, which others cannot do. Perhaps between them they might manage to assist us with the credit necessary, and go on in winding up the concern by occasional acceptances.

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[1] He probably alludes to the final settlement of accounts with the Marquis of Abercorn.

Clerkship,	£1300
Sheriffdom,	300
Mrs. Scott,	200
Interest,	100
Somers, (say)	200
	£2100

'An odd thing has happened. I have a letter, by order of the Prince Regent, offering me the laureateship in the most flattering terms. Were I my own man, as you call it, I would refuse this offer (with all gratitude); but, as I am situated, £300 or £400 a year is not to be sneezed at upon a point of poetical honour—and it makes me a better man to that extent. I have not yet written, however. I will say little about Constable's handsome behaviour, but shall not forget it. It is needless to say I shall wish him to be consulted in every step that is taken. If I should lose all I advanced to this business, I should be less vexed than I am at this moment. I am very busy with Swift at present, but shall certainly come to town if it is thought necessary; but I should first wish Mr. Constable to look into the affairs to the bottom. Since I have personally superintended them, they have been winding up very fast, and we are now almost within sight of harbour. I will also own it was partly ill-humour at John's blunder last week that made me think of throwing things up.—Yours truly, W. S.'

After writing and despatching this letter, an idea occurred to Scott that there was a quarter, not hitherto alluded to in any of these anxious epistles, from which he might consider himself as entitled to ask assistance, not only with little, if any, chance of a refusal, but (owing to particular circumstances) without incurring any very painful sense of obligation. On the 25th he says to John Ballantyne—'After some meditation, last night, it occurred to me I had some title to ask the Duke of Buccleuch's guarantee to a cash-account for £4000, as Constable proposes. I have written to him accordingly, and have very little doubt that he will be my surety. If this cash-account be in view, Mr. Constable will certainly *assist us* until the necessary writings are made out—I beg your pardon—I daresay I am very stupid; but very often you don't consider that I can't follow details which would be quite obvious to a man of business—for instance, you tell me daily, "that *if* the sums I count upon *are* forthcoming, the results must be as I suppose." But—in a week—the scene is changed, and all I can do, and more, is inadequate to bring about these results. I protest I don't know if at this moment £4000 *will* clear us out. After all, you are vexed, and so am I; and it is needless to wrangle who has a right to be angry. Commend me to James.—Yours truly, W. S.'

Having explained to the Duke of Buccleuch the position in which he stood—obliged either to procure some guarantee which would enable him to raise £4000, or to sell abruptly all his remaining interest in the copyright of his works; and repeated the statement of his personal property and income, as given in the preceding letter to James Ballantyne—Scott says to his noble friend:—'I am not asking nor desiring any loan from your Grace, but merely the honour of your sanction to my credit as a good man for £4000; and the motive of your Grace's interference would be sufficiently obvious to the London Shylocks, as your constant kindness and protection is no secret to the world. Will your Grace consider whether you can do what I propose, in conscience and safety, and favour me with your answer?—I have a very flattering offer from the Prince Regent, of his own free motion, to make me poet laureate; I am very much embarrassed by it. I am, on the one hand, afraid of giving offence where no one would willingly offend, and perhaps losing an opportunity of smoothing the way to my youngsters through life; on the other hand, the office is a ridiculous one, somehow or other—they and I should be well quizzed,—yet that I should not mind. My real feeling of reluctance lies deeper—it is, that favoured as I have been by the public, I should be considered, with some justice, I fear, as engrossing a petty emolument which might do real service to some poorer brother of the Muses. I shall be most anxious to have your Grace's advice on this subject. There seems something churlish, and perhaps conceited, in repelling a favour so handsomely offered on the part of the Sovereign's representative—and on the other hand, I feel much disposed to shake myself free from it. I should make but a bad courtier, and an ode-maker is described by Pope as a poet out of his way or out of his senses. I will find some excuse for protracting my reply till I can have the advantage of your Grace's opinion; and remain, in the meantime, very truly your obliged and grateful WALTER SCOTT.

'*P.S.*—I trust your Grace will not suppose me capable of making such a request as the enclosed, upon any idle or unnecessary speculation; but, as I stand situated, it is a matter of deep interest to me to prevent these copyrights from being disposed of either hastily or at under prices. I could have half the booksellers in London for my sureties, on a hint of a new poem; but bankers do not like people in trade, and my brains are not ready to spin another web. So your Grace must take me under your princely care, as in the days of lang syne; and I think I can say, upon the sincerity of an honest man, there is not the most distant chance of your having any trouble or expense through my means.'

The Duke's answer was in all respects such as might have been looked for from the generous kindness and manly sense of his character.

'*To Walter Scott, Esq., Abbotsford.*

'DRUMLANRIG CASTLE, *August 28th*, 1813.

'MY DEAR SIR—I received yesterday your letter of the 24th. I shall with pleasure comply with your request of guaranteeing the £4000. You must, however, furnish me with the form of a letter to this effect, as I am completely ignorant of transactions of this nature.

'I am never willing to *offer* advice, but when my opinion is asked by a friend I am ready to give it. As to the offer of his Royal Highness to appoint you laureate, I shall frankly say that I should be mortified to see you hold a situation which, by the general concurrence of the world, is stamped ridiculous. There is no good reason why this should be so; but so it is. *Walter Scott, Poet Laureate*, ceases to be the Walter Scott of the Lay, Marmion, etc. Any future poem of yours would not come forward with the same probability of a successful reception. The poet laureate would stick to you and your productions like a piece of *court plaster*. Your muse has hitherto been independent—don't put her into harness. We know how lightly she trots along when left to her natural paces, but do not try driving. I would write frankly and openly to his Royal Highness, but with respectful gratitude, for he *has* paid you a compliment. I would not fear to state that you had hitherto written when in poetic mood, but feared to trammel yourself with a fixed periodical exertion; and I cannot but conceive that his Royal Highness, who has much taste, will at once see the many objections which you must have to his proposal, but which you cannot write. Only think of being chaunted and recitatived by a parcel of hoarse and squeaking choristers on a birthday, for the edification of the bishops, pages, maids of honour, and gentlemen-pensioners! Oh, horrible, thrice horrible!—Yours sincerely, BUCCLEUCH, etc.'

The letter which first announced the Prince Regent's proposal, was from his Royal Highness's librarian, Dr. James Stanier Clarke; but before Scott answered it he had received a more formal notification from the late Marquis of Hertford, then Lord Chamberlain. I shall transcribe both these documents.

'*To Walter Scott, Esq., Edinburgh.*

'PAVILION, BRIGHTON, *August* 18, 1813.

'MY DEAR SIR—Though I have never had the honour of being introduced to you, you have frequently been pleased to convey to me very kind and flattering messages,[1] and I trust, therefore, you will allow me, without any further ceremony, to say—That I took an early opportunity this morning of seeing the Prince Regent, who arrived here late yesterday; and I then delivered to his Royal Highness my earnest wish and anxious desire that the vacant situation of poet laureate might be conferred on you. The Prince replied, "that you had already been written to, and that if you wished it, everything would be settled as I could desire."

'I hope, therefore, I may be allowed to congratulate you on this event. You are the man to whom it ought first to have been offered, and it gave me sincere pleasure to find that those sentiments of high approbation which my Royal Master had so often expressed towards you in private, were now so openly and honourably displayed in public. Have the goodness, dear sir, to receive this

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[1] The Royal librarian had forwarded to Scott presentation copies of his successive publications—The Progress of Maritime Discovery—Falconer's Shipwreck, with a Life of the Author—Naufragia—A Life of Nelson, in two quarto volumes, etc. etc. etc.

intrusive letter with your accustomed courtesy, and believe me, yours very sincerely, J. S. CLARKE,
'Librarian to H.R.H. the Prince Regent.'

'*To Walter Scott, Esq., Edinburgh.*

'RAGLEY, 31*st August* 1813.

'SIR—I thought it my duty to his Royal Highness the Prince Regent to express to him my humble opinion that I could not make so creditable a choice as in your person for the office, now vacant, of poet laureate. I am now authorized to offer it to you, which I would have taken an earlier opportunity of doing, but that, till this morning, I have had no occasion of seeing his Royal Highness since Mr. Pye's death.—I have the honour to be, sir, your most obedient, humble servant,

'INGRAM HERTFORD.'

The following letters conclude this matter :—

'*To the Most Noble the Marquis of Hertford, etc. etc.*
Ragley, Warwickshire.

'ABBOTSFORD, 4*th Sept.*

'MY LORD—I am this day honoured with your Lordship's letter of the 31st August, tendering for my acceptance the situation of poet laureate in the Royal Household. I shall always think it the highest honour of my life to have been the object of the good opinion implied in your Lordship's recommendation, and in the gracious acquiescence of his Royal Highness the Prince Regent. I humbly trust I shall not forfeit sentiments so highly valued, although I find myself under the necessity of declining, with every acknowledgment of respect and gratitude, a situation above my deserts, and offered to me in a manner so very flattering. The duties attached to the office of poet laureate are not indeed very formidable, if judged of by the manner in which they have sometimes been discharged. But an individual selected from the literary characters of Britain, upon the honourable principle expressed in your Lordship's letter, ought not, in justice to your Lordship, to his own reputation, but above all to his Royal Highness, to accept of the office, unless he were conscious of the power of filling it respectably, and attaining to excellence in the execution of the tasks which it imposes. This confidence I am so far from possessing, that, on the contrary, with all the advantages which do now, and I trust ever will, present themselves to the poet whose task it may be to commemorate the events of his Royal Highness's administration, I am certain I should feel myself inadequate to the fitting discharge of the regularly recurring duty of periodical composition, and should thus at once disappoint the expectation of the public, and, what would give me still more pain, discredit the nomination of his Royal Highness.

'Will your Lordship permit me to add, that though far from being wealthy, I already hold two official situations in the line of my profession, which afford a respectable income. It becomes me, therefore, to avoid the appearance of engrossing one of the few appointments which seem specially adapted for the provision of those whose lives have been dedicated exclusively to literature, and who too often derive from their labours more credit than emolument.

'Nothing could give me greater pain than being thought ungrateful to his Royal Highness's goodness, or insensible to the honourable distinction his undeserved condescension has been pleased to bestow upon me. I have to trust to your Lordship's kindness for laying at the feet of his Royal Highness, in the way most proper and respectful, my humble, grateful, and dutiful thanks, with these reasons for declining a situation which, though every way superior to my deserts, I should chiefly have valued as a mark of his Royal Highness's approbation.

For your Lordship's unmerited goodness, as well as for the trouble you have had upon this occasion, I can only offer you my respectful thanks, and entreat that you will be pleased to believe me, my Lord Marquis, your Lordship's much obliged and much honoured humble servant, WALTER SCOTT.'

'*To His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch, etc.*
Drumlanrig Castle.

'ABBOTSFORD, *Sept.* 5, 1813.

'MY DEAR LORD DUKE—Good advice is easily followed when it jumps with our own sentiments and inclinations. I no sooner found mine fortified by your Grace's opinion than I wrote to Lord Hertford, declining the laurel in the most civil way I could imagine. I also wrote to the Prince's librarian, who had made himself active on the occasion, dilating at somewhat more length than I thought respectful to the Lord Chamberlain, my reasons for declining the intended honour. My wife has made a copy of the last letter, which I enclose for your Grace's perusal—there is no occasion either to preserve or return it—but I am desirous you should know what I have put my apology upon, for I may reckon on its being misrepresented. I certainly should never have survived the recitative described by your Grace—it is a part of the etiquette I was quite unprepared for, and should have sunk under it. It is curious enough that Drumlanrig should always have been the refuge of bards who decline court promotion. Gay, I think, refused to be a gentleman-usher, or some such post;[1] and I am determined to abide by my post of Grand Ecuyer Trenchant of the Chateau, varied for that of tale-teller of an evening.

'I will send your Grace a copy of the letter of guarantee when I receive it from London. By an arrangement with Longman and Co., the great booksellers in Paternoster Row, I am about to be enabled to place their security, as well as my own, between your Grace and the possibility of hazard. But your kind readiness to forward a transaction which is of such great importance both to my fortune and comfort, can never be forgotten—although it can scarce make me more than I have always been, my dear Lord, your Grace's much obliged and truly faithful WALTER SCOTT.'

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[1] Poor Gay—'In wit a man, simplicity a child,'—was insulted, on the accession of George II., by the offer of a gentleman-ushership to one of the royal infants. His prose and verse largely celebrate his obligations to Charles third Duke of Queensberry, and the charming Lady Catharine Hyde, his Duchess—under whose roof the poet spent the latter years of his life.

(COPY—ENCLOSURE.)

'*To the Rev. J. S. Clarke, etc. etc. etc.*
Pavilion, Brighton.

'ABBOTSFORD, *4th September* 1813.

'SIR—On my return to this cottage, after a short excursion, I was at once surprised and deeply interested by the receipt of your letter. I shall always consider it as the proudest incident of my life that his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, whose taste in literature is so highly distinguished, should have thought of naming me to the situation of poet laureate. I feel, therefore, no small embarrassment lest I should incur the suspicion of churlish ingratitude in declining an appointment in every point of view so far above my deserts, but which I should chiefly have valued as conferred by the unsolicited generosity of his Royal Highness, and as entitling me to the distinction of terming myself an immediate servant of his Majesty. But I have to trust to your goodness in representing to his Royal Highness, with my most grateful, humble, and dutiful acknowledgments, the circumstances which compel me to decline the honour which his undeserved favour has proposed for me. The poetical pieces I have hitherto composed have uniformly been the hasty production of impulses, which I must term fortunate, since they have attracted his Royal Highness's notice and approbation. But I strongly fear, or rather am absolutely certain, that I should feel myself unable to justify, in the eye of the public, the choice of his Royal Highness, by a fitting discharge of the duties of an office which requires stated and periodical exertion. And although I am conscious how much this difficulty is lessened under the government of his Royal Highness, marked by paternal wisdom at home and successes abroad which seem to promise the liberation of Europe, I still feel that the necessity of a regular commemoration would trammel my powers of composition at the very time when it would be equally my pride and duty to tax them to the uttermost. There is another circumstance which weighs deeply in my mind while forming my present resolution. I have already the honour to hold two appointments under Government, not usually conjoined, and which afford an income, far indeed from wealth, but amounting to decent independence. I fear, therefore, that in accepting one of the few situations which our establishment holds forth as the peculiar provision of literary men, I might be justly censured as availing myself of his Royal Highness's partiality to engross more than my share of the public revenue, to the prejudice of competitors equally meritorious at least, and otherwise unprovided for; and as this calculation will be made by thousands who know that I have reaped great advantages by the favour of the public, without being aware of the losses which it has been my misfortune to sustain, I may fairly reckon that it will terminate even more to my prejudice than if they had the means of judging accurately of my real circumstances. I have thus far, sir, frankly exposed to you, for his Royal Highness's favourable consideration, the feelings which induce me to decline an appointment offered in a manner so highly calculated to gratify, I will not say my vanity only, but my sincere feelings of devoted attachment to the crown and constitution of my country, and to the person of his Royal Highness, by whom its government has been so worthily administered. No consideration on earth would give me so much pain as the idea of my real feelings being misconstrued on this occasion, or that I should be supposed stupid enough not to estimate the value of his Royal Highness's favour, or so ungrateful as not to feel it as I ought. And you will relieve me from great anxiety if you will have the goodness to let me know if his Royal Highness is pleased to receive favourably my humble and grateful apology.

'I cannot conclude without expressing my sense of your kindness and of the trouble you have had upon this account, and I request you will believe me, sir, your obliged humble servant, WALTER SCOTT.'

'*To Robert Southey, Esq., Keswick.*

'ABBOTSFORD, *4th September* 1813.

'MY DEAR SOUTHEY—On my return here I found, to my no small surprise, a letter tendering me the laurel vacant by the death of the poetical Pye. I have declined the appointment, as being incompetent to the task of annual commemoration; but chiefly as being provided for in my professional department, and unwilling to incur the censure of engrossing the emolument attached to one of the few appointments which seems proper to be filled by a man of literature who has no other views in life. Will you forgive me, my dear friend, if I own I had you in my recollection? I have given Croker the hint, and otherwise endeavoured to throw the office into your option. I am uncertain if you will like it, for the laurel has certainly been tarnished by some of its wearers, and, as at present managed, its duties are inconvenient and somewhat liable to ridicule. But the latter matter might be amended, as I think the Regent's good sense would lead him to lay aside these regular commemorations; and as to the former point, it has been worn by Dryden of old, and by Warton in modern days. If you quote my own refusal against me, I reply—first, I have been luckier than you in holding two offices not usually conjoined; secondly, I did not refuse it from any foolish prejudice against the situation, otherwise how durst I mention it to you, my elder brother in the muse?—but from a sort of internal hope that they would give it to you, upon whom it would be so much more worthily conferred. For I am not such an ass as not to know that you are my better in poetry, though I have had, probably but for a time, the tide of popularity in my favour. I have not time to add ten thousand other reasons, but I only wished to tell you how the matter was, and to beg you to think before you reject the offer which I flatter myself will be made to you. If I had not been, like Dogberry, a fellow with two gowns already, I should have jumped at it like a cock at a gooseberry.—Ever yours most truly, WALTER SCOTT.'

Immediately after Mr. Croker received Scott's letter here alluded to, Mr. Southey was invited to accept the vacant laurel. But, as the birthday ode had been omitted since the illness of King George III., and the Regent had good sense and good taste enough to hold that ancient custom as 'more honoured in the breach than the observance,' the whole fell completely into disuse.[1] The office was thus relieved from the burden of ridicule which had, in spite of so many illustrious names, adhered to it; and though its emoluments did not in fact amount to more than a quarter of the sum at which Scott rated them when he declined it, they formed no unacceptable addition to Mr. Southey's income. Scott's answer to his brother poet's affectionate and grateful letter on the conclusion of this affair is as follows :—

'*To R. Southey, Esq., Keswick.*

'EDINBURGH, *November* 13, 1813.

'I do not delay, my dear Southey, to say my *gratulor*. Long may you live, as Paddy says, to rule over us, and to redeem the crown of Spenser and of Dryden to its pristine dignity. I am only discontented with the extent of your royal revenue, which I thought had been £400, or £300 at the very least. Is there no getting rid of that iniquitous modus, and requiring the *butt* in kind? I would have you think of it; I know no man so well entitled to Xeres sack as yourself, though many bards would make a better figure at drinking it. I should think that in due time a memorial might get some relief in this part of the appointment—it should be at least £100 wet and £100 dry. When you have carried your point of discarding the ode, and my point of getting the sack, you will be exactly in the situation of Davy in the farce, who stipulates for more wages, less work, and the key of the ale-cellar.[1] I was greatly delighted with the circumstances of your investiture. It reminded me of the porters at Calais with Dr. Smollett's baggage, six of them seizing upon one small portmanteau, and bearing it in triumph to his lodgings. You see what it is to laugh at the superstitions of a gentleman-usher, as I think you do somewhere. "The whirligig of time brings in his revenges."[2]

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[1] See the Preface to the third volume of the late Collective Edition of Mr. Southey's Poems, p. xii., where he corrects a trivial error I had fallen into in the first edition of these Memoirs, and adds, 'Sir Walter's conduct was, as it always was, characteristically generous, and in the highest degree friendly.'—[1839.]

'Adieu, my dear Southey; my best wishes attend all that you do, and my best congratulations every good that attends you—yea even this, the very least of Providence's mercies, as a poor clergyman said when pronouncing grace over a herring. I should like to know how the Prince received you; his address is said to be excellent, and his knowledge of literature far from despicable. What a change of fortune even since the short time when we met! The great work of retribution is now rolling onward to consummation, yet am I not fully satisfied—*pereat iste!*—there will be no permanent peace in Europe till Buonaparte sleeps with the tyrants of old. My best compliments attend Mrs. Southey and your family.—Ever yours,

'WALTER SCOTT.'

To avoid returning to the affair of the laureateship, I have placed together such letters concerning it as appeared important. I regret to say that, had I adhered to the chronological order of Scott's correspondence, ten out of every twelve letters between the date of his application to the Duke of Buccleuch, and his removal to Edinburgh on the 12th of November, would have continued to tell the same story of pecuniary difficulty, urgent and almost daily applications for new advances to the Ballantynes, and endeavours, more or less successful, but in no case effectually so, to relieve the pressure on the bookselling firm by sales of its heavy stock to the great publishing houses of Edinburgh and London. Whatever success these endeavours met with, appears to have been due either directly or indirectly to Mr. Constable; who did a great deal more than prudence would have warranted, in taking on himself the results of its unhappy adventures,—and, by his sagacious advice, enabled the distressed partners to procure similar assistance at the hands of others, who did not partake his own feelings of personal kindness and sympathy. 'I regret to learn,' Scott writes to him on the 16th October, 'that there is great danger of your exertions in our favour, which once promised so fairly, proving finally abortive, or at least being too tardy in their operation to work out our relief. If anything more can be honourably and properly done to avoid a most unpleasant shock, I shall be most willing to do it; if not—God's will be done! There will be enough of property, including my private fortune, to pay every claim; and I have not used prosperity so ill as greatly to fear adversity. But these things we will talk over at meeting; meanwhile believe me, with a sincere sense of your kindness and friendly views, very truly yours, W. S.'—I have no wish to quote more largely from the letters which passed during this crisis between Scott and his partners. The pith and substance of his, to John Ballantyne at least, seems to be summed up in one brief *postscript*:—'For God's sake treat me as a man, and not as a milch-cow!'

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[1] Garrick's Bon Ton, or High Life Above Stairs.

[2] Twelfth Night, Act V. Scene 1.

The difficulties of the Ballantynes were by this time well known throughout the commercial circles not only of Edinburgh, but of London; and a report of their actual bankruptcy, with the addition that Scott was engaged as their surety to the extent of £20,000, found its way to Mr. Morritt about the beginning of November. This dear friend wrote to him, in the utmost anxiety, and made liberal offers of assistance in case the catastrophe might still be averted; but the term of Martinmas, always a critical one in Scotland, had passed before this letter reached Edinburgh, and Scott's answer will show symptoms of a clearing horizon. I think also there is one expression in it which could hardly have failed to convey to Mr. Morritt that his friend was involved, more deeply than he had ever acknowledged, in the concerns of the Messrs. Ballantyne.

'*To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., Rokeby Park.*

'EDINBURGH, 20*th November* 1813.

'I did not answer your very kind letter, my dear Morritt, until I could put your friendly heart to rest upon the report you have heard, which I could not do entirely until this term of Martinmas was passed. I have the pleasure to say that there is no truth whatever in the Ballantynes' reported bankruptcy. They have had severe difficulties for the last four months to make their resources balance the demands upon them, and I, having the price of Rokeby, and other monies in their hands, have had considerable reason for apprehension, and no slight degree of plague and trouble. They have, however, been so well supported, that I have got out of hot water upon their account. They are winding up their bookselling concern with great regularity, and are to abide hereafter by the printing-office, which, with its stock, etc., will revert to them fairly.

'I have been able to redeem the offspring of my brain, and they are like to pay me like grateful children. This matter has set me a-thinking about money more seriously than ever I did in my life, and I have begun by insuring my life for £4000, to secure some ready cash to my family should I slip girths suddenly. I think my other property, library, etc., may be worth about £12,000, and I have not much debt.

'Upon the whole, I see no prospect of any loss whatever. Although in the course of human events I may be disappointed, there certainly *can* be none to vex your kind and affectionate heart on my account. I am young, with a large official income, and if I lose anything now, I have gained a great deal in my day. I cannot tell you, and will not attempt to tell you, how much I was affected by your letter—so much, indeed, that for several days I could not make my mind up to express myself on the subject. Thank God! all real danger was yesterday put over—and I will write, in two or three days, a funny letter, without any of these vile cash matters, of which it may be said there is no living with them nor without them.—Ever yours, most truly, WALTER SCOTT.'

All these annoyances produced no change whatever in Scott's habits of literary industry. During these anxious months of September, October, and November, he kept feeding James Ballantyne's press, from day to day, both with the annotated text of the closing volumes of Swift's works, and with the MS. of his Life of the Dean. He had also proceeded to mature in his own mind the plan of the Lord of the Isles, and executed such a portion of the First Canto as gave him confidence to renew his negotiation with Constable for the sale of the whole, or part of its copyright. It was, moreover, at this period, that, looking into an old cabinet in search of some fishing-tackle, his eye chanced to light once more on the Ashestiel fragment of Waverley.—He read over those introductory chapters—thought they had been undervalued—and determined to finish the story.

All this while, too, he had been subjected to those interruptions from idle strangers, which from the first to the last imposed so heavy a tax on his celebrity; and he no doubt received such guests with all his usual urbanity of attention. Yet I was not surprised to discover, among his hasty notes to the Ballantynes, several of tenor akin to the following specimens:—

'*Sept.* 2*nd*, 1813.

'My temper is really worn to a hair's-breadth. The intruder of yesterday hung on me till twelve to-day. When I had just taken my pen, he was relieved, like a sentry leaving guard, by two other lounging visitors; and their post has now been supplied by some people on real business.'

Again—

'*Monday Evening*.

Oh James! oh James! Two Irish dames
  Oppress me very sore;
I groaning send one sheet I've penned—
  For, hang them! there's no more.

A scrap of nearly the same date to his brother Thomas may be introduced, as belonging to the same state of feeling—'Dear Tom, I observe what you say as to Mr. * * * *; and as you may often be exposed to similar requests, which it would be difficult to parry, you can sign such letters of introduction as relate to persons whom you do not delight to honour short, *T. Scott;* by which abridgement of your name I shall understand to limit my civilities.'

It is proper to mention, that, in the very agony of these perplexities, the unfortunate Maturin received from him a timely succour of £50, rendered doubly acceptable by the kind and judicious letter of advice in which it was enclosed; and I have before me ample evidence that his benevolence had been extended to other struggling brothers of the trade, even when he must often have had actual difficulty to meet the immediate expenditure of his own family. All this, however, will not surprise the reader.

Nor did his general correspondence suffer much interruption; and, as some relief after so many painful details, I shall close the narrative of this anxious year by a few specimens of his miscellaneous communications:—

'*To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.*

'ABBOTSFORD, *Sept.* 12, 1813.

'MY DEAR MISS BAILLIE—I have been a vile lazy correspondent, having been strolling about the country, and indeed a little way into England, for the greater part of July and August; in short, "aye skipping here and there," like the Tanner of Tamworth's horse. Since I returned, I have had a gracious offer of the laurel on the part of the Prince Regent. You will not wonder that I have declined it, though with every expression of gratitude which such an unexpected compliment demanded. Indeed, it would be high imprudence in one having literary reputation to maintain, to accept of an offer which obliged him to produce a poetical exercise on a given theme twice a year; and besides, as my loyalty to the royal family is very sincere, I would not wish to have it thought mercenary. The public has done its part by me very well, and so has Government: and I thought this little literary provision ought to be bestowed on one who has made literature his sole profession. If the Regent means to make it respectable, he will abolish the foolish custom of the annual odes, which is a drudgery no person of talent could ever willingly encounter—or come clear off from, if he was so rash. And so, peace be with the laurel,

Profaned by Cibber and contemned by Gray.

'I was for a fortnight at Drumlanrig, a grand old chateau, which has descended, by the death of the late Duke of Queensberry, to the Duke of Buccleuch. It is really a most magnificent pile, and when embosomed amid the wide forest scenery, of which I have an infantine recollection, must have been very romantic. But old Q. made wild devastation among the noble trees, although some fine ones are still left, and a quantity of young shoots are, in despite of the want of every kind of attention, rushing up to supply the places of the fathers of the forest from whose stems they are springing. It will now I trust be in better hands, for the reparation of the castle goes hand in hand with the rebuilding of all the cottages, in which an aged race of pensioners of Duke Charles, and his pious wife,—"Kitty, blooming, young and gay,"—have, during the last reign, been pining into rheumatisms and agues, in neglected poverty.

'All this is beautiful to witness; the indoor work does not please me so well, though I am aware that, to those who are to inhabit an old castle, it becomes often a matter of necessity to make alterations by which its tone and character are changed for the worse. Thus a noble gallery, which ran the whole length of the front, is converted into bedrooms—very comfortable, indeed, but not quite so magnificent; and as grim a dungeon as ever knave or honest man was confined in, is in some danger of being humbled into a wine-cellar. It is almost impossible to draw your breath, when you recollect that this, so many feet underground, and totally bereft of air and light, was built for the imprisonment of human beings, whether guilty, suspected, or merely unfortunate. Certainly, if our frames are not so hardy, our hearts are softer than those of our forefathers, although probably a few years of domestic war, or feudal oppression, would bring us back to the same case-hardening both in body and sentiment.

'I meant to have gone to Rokeby, but was prevented by Mrs. Morritt being unwell, which I very much regret, as I know few people that deserve better health. I am very glad you have known them, and I pray you to keep up the acquaintance in winter. I am glad to see by this day's paper that our friend Terry has made a favourable impression on his first appearance at Covent Garden—he has got a very good engagement there for three years, at twelve guineas a week, which is a handsome income.—This little place comes on as fast as can be reasonably hoped; and the pinasters are all above the ground, but cannot be planted out for twelve months. My kindest compliments—in which Mrs. Scott always joins—attend Miss Agnes, the Doctor, and his family.—Ever, my dear friend, yours most faithfully, WALTER SCOTT.'

'*To Daniel Terry, Esq., London.*

'ABBOTSFORD, 20*th October* 1813.

'DEAR TERRY—You will easily believe that I was greatly pleased to hear from you. I had already learned from The Courier (what I had anticipated too strongly to doubt for one instant) your favourable impression on the London public. I think nothing can be more judicious in the managers than to exercise the various powers you possess, in their various extents. A man of genius is apt to be limited to one single style, and to become perforce a mannerist, merely because the public is not so just to its own amusement as to give him an opportunity of throwing himself into different lines; and doubtless the exercise of our talents in one unvaried course, by degrees renders them incapable of any other, as the over-use of any one limb of our body gradually impoverishes the rest. I shall be anxious to hear that you have played *Malvolio*, which is, I think, one of your *coups-de-maître*, and in which envy itself cannot affect to trace an imitation. That same charge of imitation, by the way, is one of the surest scents upon which dunces are certain to open. Undoubtedly, if the same character is well performed by two individuals, their acting must bear a general resemblance—it could not be well performed by both were it otherwise. But this general resemblance, which arises from both following nature and their author, can as little be termed imitation as the river in Wales can be identified with that of Macedon. Never mind these dunderheads, but go on your own way, and scorn to laugh on the right side of your mouth, to make a difference from some ancient comedian who, in the same part, always laughed on the left. Stick to the public—be uniform in your exertions to study even those characters which have little in them, and to give a grace which you cannot find in the author. Audiences are always grateful for this—or rather —for gratitude is as much out of the question in the Theatre, as Bernadotte says to Boney it is amongst sovereigns—or rather, the audience is gratified by receiving pleasure from a part which they had no expectation would afford them any. It is in this view that, had I been of your profession, and possessed talents, I think I should have liked often those parts with which my brethren quarrelled, and studied to give them an effect which their intrinsic merit did not entitle them to. I have some thoughts of being in town in spring (not resolutions by any means); and it will be an additional motive to witness your success, and to find you as comfortably established as your friends in Castle Street earnestly hope and trust you will be.

'The summer—an uncommon summer in beauty and serenity—has glided away from us at Abbotsford, amidst our usual petty cares and petty pleasures. The children's garden is in apple-pie order, our own completely cropped and stocked, and all the trees flourishing like the green bay of the Psalmist. I have been so busy about our domestic arrangements, that I have not killed six hares this season. Besides, I have got a cargo of old armour, sufficient to excite a suspicion that I intend to mount a squadron of cuirassiers. I only want a place for my armoury; and, thank God, I can wait for that, these being no times for building. And this brings me to the loss of poor Stark, with whom more genius has died than is left behind among the collected universality of Scottish architects. O, Lord!—but what does it signify?—Earth was born to bear, and man to pay (that is, lords, nabobs, Glasgow traders, and those who have wherewithal)—so wherefore grumble at great castles and cottages, with which the taste of the latter contrives to load the back of Mother Terra?—I have no hobby-horsical commissions at present, unless if you meet the Voyages of Captain Richard, or Robert Falconer, in one volume—"cow-heel, quoth Sancho"—I mark them for my own. Mrs. Scott, Sophia, Anne, and the boys, unite in kind remembrances.—Ever yours truly, W. SCOTT.'

'*To the Right Hon. Lord Byron*, 4 *Bennet Street,*
St. James's, London.

'ABBOTSFORD, *6th Nov.* 1813.

'MY DEAR LORD—I was honoured with your Lordship's letter of the 27th September,[1] and have sincerely to regret that there is such a prospect of your leaving Britain, without my achieving your personal acquaintance. I heartily wish your Lordship had come down to Scotland this season, for I have never seen a finer, and you might have renewed all your old associations with Caledonia, and made such new ones as were likely to suit you. I dare promise you would have liked me well enough—for I have many properties of a Turk—never trouble myself about futurity—am as lazy as the day is long—delight in collecting silver-mounted pistols and ataghans, and go out of my own road for no one—all which I take to be attributes of your good Moslem. Moreover, I am somewhat an admirer of royalty, and in order to maintain this part of my creed, I shall take care never to be connected with a court, but stick to the *ignotum pro mirabili*.

'The author of the Queen's Wake will be delighted with your approbation. He is a wonderful creature for his opportunities, which were far inferior to those of the generality of Scottish peasants. Burns, for instance—(not that their extent of talents is to be compared for an instant)—had an education not much worse than the sons of many gentlemen in Scotland. But poor Hogg literally could neither read nor write till a very late period of his life; and when he first distinguished himself by his poetical talent, could neither spell nor write grammar. When I first knew him, he used to send me his poetry, and was both indignant and horrified when I pointed out to him parallel passages in authors whom he had never read, but whom all the world would have sworn he had copied. An evil fate has hitherto attended him, and baffled every attempt that has been made to place him in a road to independence. But I trust he may be more fortunate in future.

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[1] The letter in question has not been preserved in Scott's collection of correspondence. This leaves some allusions in the answer obscure.

'I have not yet seen Southey in the Gazette as Laureate. He is a real poet, such as we read of in former times, with every atom of his soul and every moment of his time dedicated to literary pursuits, in which he differs from almost all those who have divided public attention with him. Your Lordship's habits of society, for example, and my own professional and official avocations, must necessarily connect us much more with our respective classes in the usual routine of pleasure or business, than if we had not any other employment than *vacare musis.* But Southey's ideas are all poetical, and his whole soul dedicated to the pursuit of literature. In this respect, as well as in many others, he is a most striking and interesting character.

'I am very much interested in all that concerns your Giaour, which is universally approved of among our mountains. I have heard no objection except by one or two geniuses, who run over poetry as a cat does over a harpsichord, and they affect to complain of obscurity. On the contrary, I hold every real lover of the art is obliged to you for condensing the narrative, by giving us only those striking scenes which you have shown to be so susceptible of poetic ornament, and leaving to imagination the says I's and says he's, and all the minutiæ of detail which might be proper in giving evidence before a court of justice. The truth is, I think poetry is most striking when the mirror can be held up to the reader, and the same kept constantly before his eyes; it requires most uncommon powers to support a direct and downright narration; nor can I remember many instances of its being successfully maintained even by our greatest bards.

'As to those who have done me the honour to take my rhapsodies for their model, I can only say they have exemplified the ancient adage, "one fool makes many"; nor do I think I have yet had much reason to suppose I have given rise to anything of distinguished merit. The worst is, it draws on me letters and commendatory verses, to which my sad and sober thanks in humble prose are deemed a most unmeet and ungracious reply. Of this sort of plague your Lordship must ere now have had more than your share, but I think you can hardly have met with so original a request as concluded the letter of a bard I this morning received, who limited his demands to being placed in his due station on Parnassus—*and* invested with a post in the Edinburgh Custom House.

'What an awakening of dry bones seems to be taking place on the Continent! I could as soon have believed in the resurrection of the Romans as in that of the Prussians—yet it seems a real and active renovation of national spirit. It will certainly be strange enough if that tremendous pitcher, which has travelled to so many fountains, should be at length broken on the banks of the Saale; but from the highest to the lowest we are the fools of fortune. Your Lordship will probably recollect where the Oriental tale occurs, of a Sultan who consulted Solomon on the proper inscription for a signet-ring, requiring that the maxim which it conveyed should be at once proper for moderating the presumption of prosperity and tempering the pressure of adversity. The apophthegm supplied by the Jewish sage was, I think, admirably adapted for both purposes, being comprehended in the words "And this also shall pass away."

'When your Lordship sees Rogers, will you remember me kindly to him? I hope to be in London next spring, and renew my acquaintance with my friends there. It will be an additional motive if I could flatter myself that your Lordship's stay in the country will permit me the pleasure of waiting upon you.—I am, with much respect and regard, your Lordship's truly honoured and obliged humble servant, WALTER SCOTT.

'I go to Edinburgh next week, *multum gemens*.'

'*To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.*

'EDINBURGH, 10*th Dec.* 1813.

'Many thanks, my dear friend, for your kind token of remembrance, which I yesterday received. I ought to blush, if I had grace enough left, at my long and ungenerous silence: but what shall I say? The habit of procrastination, which had always more or less a dominion over me, does not relax its sway as I grow older and less willing to take up the pen. I have not written to dear Ellis this age,—yet there is not a day that I do not think of you and him, and one or two other friends in your southern land. I am very glad the whisky came safe: do not stint so laudable an admiration for the liquor of Caledonia, for I have plenty of right good and sound Highland Ferintosh, and I can always find an opportunity of sending you up a bottle.

'We are here almost mad with the redemption of Holland, which has an instant and gratifying effect on the trade of Leith, and indeed all along the east coast of Scotland. About £100,000 worth of various commodities, which had been dormant in cellars and warehouses, was sold the first day the news arrived, and Orange ribbons and *Orange Boven* was the order of the day among all ranks. It is a most miraculous revivification which it has been our fate to witness. Though of a tolerably sanguine temper, I had fairly adjourned all hopes and expectations of the kind till another generation: the same power, however, that opened the windows of heaven and the fountains of the great deep, has been pleased to close them, and to cause his wind to blow upon the face of the waters, so that we may look out from the ark of our preservation, and behold the reappearance of the mountain crests, and old, beloved, and well-known landmarks, which we had deemed swallowed up for ever in the abyss: the dove with the olive branch would complete the simile, but of that I see little hope. Buonaparte is that desperate gambler, who will not rise while he has a stake left; and, indeed, to be

King of France would be a poor pettifogging enterprise, after having been almost Emperor of the World. I think he will drive things on till the fickle and impatient people over whom he rules get tired of him and shake him out of the saddle. Some circumstances seem to intimate his having become jealous of the Senate; and indeed anything like a representative body, however imperfectly constructed, becomes dangerous to a tottering tyranny. The sword displayed on both frontiers may, like that brandished across the road of Balaam, terrify even dumb and irrational subjection into utterance: but enough of politics, though now a more cheerful subject than they have been for many years past.

'I have had a strong temptation to go to the Continent this Christmas; and should certainly have done so, had I been sure of getting from Amsterdam to Frankfort, where, as I know Lord Aberdeen and Lord Cathcart, I might expect a welcome. But notwithstanding my earnest desire to see the allied armies cross the Rhine, which I suppose must be one of the grandest military spectacles in the world, I should like to know that the roads were tolerably secure, and the means of getting forward attainable. In spring, however, if no unfortunate change takes place, I trust to visit the camp of the allies, and see all the pomp and power and circumstance of war, which I have so often imagined, and sometimes attempted to embody in verse.—Johnnie Richardson is a good, honourable, kind-hearted little fellow as lives in the world, with a pretty taste for poetry, which he has wisely kept under subjection to the occupation of drawing briefs and revising conveyances. It is a great good fortune to him to be in your neighbourhood, as he is an idolater of genius, and where could he offer up his worship so justly? And I am sure you will like him, for he is really "officious, innocent, sincere."[1] Terry, I hope, will get on well; he is industrious, and zealous for the honour of his art. Ventidius must have been an excellent part for him, hovering between tragedy and comedy, which is precisely what will suit him. We have a woeful want of him here, both in public and private, for he was one of the most easy and quiet chimney-corner companions that I have had for these two or three years past.

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[1] Scott's old friend, Mr. John Richardson, had shortly before this time taken a house in Miss Baillie's neighbourhood, on Hampstead Heath.

'I am very glad if anything I have written to you could give pleasure to Miss Edgeworth, though I am sure it will fall very short of the respect which I have for her brilliant talents. I always write to you *à la volée*, and trust implicitly to your kindness and judgment upon all occasions where you may choose to communicate any part of my letters.[1] As to the taxing men, I must battle them as I can: they are worse than the great Emathian conqueror, who

> bade spare
> The house of Pindarus, when temple and tower
> Went to the ground.[2]

Your pinasters are coming up gallantly in the nursery-bed at Abbotsford. I trust to pay the whole establishment a Christmas visit, which will be, as Robinson Crusoe says of his glass of rum, "to mine exceeding refreshment." All Edinburgh have been on tiptoe to see Madame de Staël, but she is now not likely to honour us with a visit, at which I cannot prevail on myself to be very sorry; for as I tired of some of her works, I am afraid I should disgrace my taste by tiring of the authoress too. All my little people are very well, learning, with great pain and diligence, much which they will have forgotten altogether, or nearly so, in the course of twelve years hence; but the habit of learning is something in itself, even when the lessons are forgotten.

'I must not omit to tell you that a friend of mine, with whom that metal is more plenty than with me, has given me some gold mohurs to be converted into a ring for enchasing King Charles' hair; but this is not to be done until I get to London, and get a very handsome pattern.—Ever, most truly and sincerely, yours,

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[1] Miss Baillie had apologized to him for having sent an extract of one of his letters to her friend at Edgeworthstown.

[2] Milton—Sonnet No. VIII.

'W. SCOTT.'

The last sentence of this letter refers to a lock of the hair of Charles I., which, at Dr. Baillie's request, Sir Henry Halford had transmitted to Scott when the royal martyr's remains were discovered at Windsor, in April 1813. Sir John Malcolm had given him some Indian coins to supply virgin gold for the setting of this relic; and for some years he constantly wore the ring, which is a massive and beautiful one, with the word REMEMBER surrounding it in highly relieved black-letter.

The poet's allusion to 'taxing men' may require another word of explanation. To add to his troubles during this autumn of 1813, a demand was made on him by the Commissioners of the Income-tax, to return in one of their schedules an account of the profits of his literary exertions during the three last years. He demurred to this, and took the opinion of high authorities in Scotland, who confirmed him in his impression that the claim was beyond the statute. The grounds of his resistance are thus briefly stated in one of his letters to his legal friend in London:—

'*To John Richardson, Esq., Fludyer Street, Westminster.*

'MY DEAR RICHARDSON—I have owed you a letter this long time, but perhaps my debt might not yet be discharged had I not a little matter of business to trouble you with. I wish you to lay before either the King's counsel, or Sir Samuel Romilly and any other you may approve, the point whether a copyright, being sold for the term during which Queen Anne's act warranted the property to the author, the price is liable in payment of the property-tax. I contend it is not so liable, for the following reasons:—1*st*, It is a patent right, expected to produce an annual, or at least an incidental profit, during the currency of many years; and surely it was never contended that if a man sold a theatrical patent, or a patent for machinery, property-tax should be levied in the first place on the full price as paid to the seller, and then on the profits as purchased by the buyer. I am not very expert at figures, but I think it clear that a double taxation takes place. *2nd*, It should be considered that a book may be the work not of one year, but of a man's whole life; and as it has been found, in a late case of the Duke of Gordon, that a fall of timber was not subject to property-tax because it comprehended the produce of thirty years, it seems at least equally fair that mental exertions should not be subjected to a harder principle of measurement. *3rd*, The demand is, so far as I can learn, totally new and unheard of. *4th*, Supposing that I died and left my manuscripts to be sold publicly along with the rest of my library, is there any ground for taxing what might be received for the written book, any more than any rare printed book which a speculative bookseller might purchase with a view to re-publication? You will know whether any of these things ought to be suggested in the brief. David Hume, and every lawyer here whom I have spoken to, consider the demand as illegal.—Believe me truly yours, WALTER SCOTT.'

Mr. Richardson having prepared a case, obtained upon it the opinions of Mr. Alexander (afterwards Sir William Alexander and Chief Baron of the Exchequer) and of the late Sir Samuel Romilly. These eminent lawyers agreed in the view of their Scotch brethren; and after a tedious correspondence, the Lords of the Treasury at last decided that the Income-tax Commissioners should abandon their claim upon the produce of literary labour. I have thought it worth while to preserve some record of this decision, and of the authorities on which it rested, in case such a demand should ever be renewed hereafter.

In the beginning of December, the Town Council of Edinburgh resolved to send a deputation to congratulate the Prince Regent on the prosperous course of public events, and they invited Scott to draw up their address, which, on its being transmitted for previous inspection to

Mr. William Dundas, then Member for the City, and through him shown privately to the Regent, was acknowledged to the penman, by his Royal Highness's command, as 'the most elegant congratulation a sovereign ever received, or a subject offered.'[1] The Lord Provost of Edinburgh presented it accordingly at the levee of the 10th, and it was received most graciously. On returning to the north, the Magistrates expressed their sense of Scott's services on this occasion by presenting him with the freedom of his native city, and also with a piece of plate,—which the reader will find alluded to, among other matters of more consequence, in a letter to be quoted presently.

At this time Scott further expressed his patriotic exultation in the rescue of Europe, by two songs for the anniversary of the death of Pitt; one of which has ever since, I believe, been chaunted at that celebration :—

'O dread was the time and more dreadful the omen,
When the brave on Marengo lay slaughter'd in vain,' etc.[2]

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[1] Letter from the Right Hon. W. Dundas, dated 6th December 1813.

[2] See Scott's Poetical Works, vol. xi. p. 309. Edition 1834.

CHAPTER XXVII

Insanity of Henry Weber—Letters on the Abdication of Napoleon, etc.—Publication of Scott's Life and Edition of Swift—Essays for the Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica—Completion and Publication of Waverley.

1814

I HAVE to open the year 1814 with a melancholy story. Mention has been made, more than once, of Henry Weber, a poor German scholar, who escaping to this country in 1804, from misfortunes in his own, excited Scott's compassion, and was thenceforth furnished, through his means, with literary employment of various sorts. Weber was a man of considerable learning; but Scott, as was his custom, appears to have formed an exaggerated notion of his capacity, and certainly countenanced him, to his own severe cost, in several most unfortunate undertakings. When not engaged on things of a more ambitious character, he had acted for ten years as his protector's amanuensis, and when the family were in Edinburgh, he very often dined with them. There was something very interesting in his appearance and manners: he had a fair, open countenance, in which the honesty and enthusiasm of his nation were alike visible; his demeanour was gentle and modest; and he had not only a stock of curious antiquarian knowledge, but the reminiscences, which he detailed with amusing simplicity, of an early life chequered with many strange-enough adventures. He was, in short, much a favourite with Scott and all the household; and was invited to dine with them so frequently, chiefly because his friend was aware that he had an unhappy propensity to drinking, and was anxious to keep him away from places where he might have been more likely to indulge it. This vice, however, had been growing on him; and of late Scott had found it necessary to make some rather severe remonstrances about habits which were at once injuring his health, and interrupting his literary industry.

They had, however, parted kindly when Scott left Edinburgh at Christmas 1813,—and the day after his return, Weber attended him as usual in his library, being employed in transcribing extracts during several hours, while his friend, seated over against him, continued working at the Life of Swift. The light beginning to fail, Scott threw himself back in his chair, and was about to ring for candles, when he observed the German's eyes fixed upon him with an unusual solemnity of expression. 'Weber,' said he, 'what's the matter with you?' 'Mr. Scott,' said Weber, rising, 'you have long insulted me, and I can bear it no longer. I have brought a pair of pistols with me, and must insist on your taking one of them instantly'; and with that he produced the weapons, which had been deposited under his chair, and laid one of them on Scott's manuscript. 'You are mistaken, I think,' said Scott, 'in your way of setting about this affair—but no matter. It can, however, be no part of your object to annoy Mrs. Scott and the children; therefore, if you please, we will put the pistols into the drawer till after dinner, and then arrange to go out together like gentlemen.' Weber answered with equal coolness, 'I believe that will be better,' and laid the second pistol also on the table. Scott locked them both in his desk, and said, 'I am glad you have felt the propriety of what I suggested—let me only request further, that nothing may occur while we are at dinner to give my wife any suspicion of what has been passing.' Weber again assented, and Scott withdrew to his dressing-room, from which he immediately despatched a message to one of Weber's intimate companions,—and then dinner was served, and Weber joined the family circle as usual. He conducted himself with perfect composure, and everything seemed to go on in the ordinary way, until whisky and hot water being produced, Scott, instead of inviting his guest to help himself, mixed two moderate tumblers of toddy, and handed one of them to Weber, who, upon that, started up with a furious countenance, but instantly sat down again, and when Mrs. Scott expressed her fear that he was ill, answered placidly that he was liable to spasms, but that the pain was gone. He then took the glass, eagerly gulped down its contents, and pushed it back to Scott. At this moment the friend who had been sent for made his appearance, and Weber, on seeing him enter the room, rushed past him and out of the house, without stopping to put on his hat. The friend, who pursued instantly, came up with him at the end of the street, and did all he could to soothe his agitation, but in vain. The same evening he was obliged to be put into a strait waistcoat; and though, in a few days, he exhibited such symptoms of recovery that he was allowed to go by himself to pay a visit in the North of England, he there soon relapsed, and continued ever afterwards a hopeless lunatic, being supported to the end of his life, in June 1818, at Scott's expense in an asylum at York.

The reader will now appreciate the gentle delicacy of the following letter :—

'*To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., Rokeby, Greta Bridge.*

'EDINBURGH, *7th January* 1814.

'Many happy New-years to you and Mrs. Morritt.

'MY DEAR MORRITT—I have postponed writing a long while, in hopes to send you the Life of Swift. But I have been delayed by an odd accident. Poor Weber, whom you may have heard me mention as a sort of grinder of mine, who assisted me in various ways, has fallen into a melancholy state. His habits, like those of most German students, were always too convivial—this, of course, I guarded against while he was in my house, which was always once a week at least; but unfortunately he undertook a long walk through the Highlands of upwards of 2000 miles, and, I suppose, took potations pottle deep to support him through the fatigue. His mind became accordingly quite unsettled, and after some strange behaviour here, he was fortunately prevailed upon to go to * * * * who resides in Yorkshire. It is not unlikely, from something that dropped from him, that he may take it into his head to call at Rokeby, in which case you must parry any visit, upon the score of Mrs. Morritt's health. If he were what he used to be, you would be much pleased with him; for besides a very extensive general acquaintance with literature, he was particularly deep in our old dramatic lore, a good modern linguist, a tolerable draughtsman and antiquary, and a most excellent hydrographer. I have not the least doubt that if he submits to the proper regimen of abstinence and moderate exercise, he will be quite well in a few weeks or days—if not, it is miserable to think what may happen. The being suddenly deprived of his services in this melancholy way has flung me back at least a month with Swift, and left me no time to write to my friends, for all my memoranda, etc., were in his hands, and had to be new-modelled, etc. etc.

'Our glorious prospects on the Continent called forth the congratulations of the City of Edinburgh among others. The Magistrates asked me to draw their address, which was presented by the Lord Provost in person, who happens to be a gentleman of birth and fortune.[1] The Prince said some very handsome things respecting the address, with which the Magistrates were so much elated, that they have done the genteel thing (as Winifred Jenkins says) by their literary adviser, and presented me with the freedom of the city, and a handsome piece of plate. I got the freedom at the same time with Lord Dalhousie and Sir Thomas Graham, and the Provost gave a very brilliant entertainment. About 150 gentlemen dined at his own house, all as well served as if there had been a dozen. So if one strikes a cuff on the one side from ill-will, there is a pat on the other from kindness, and the shuttlecock is kept flying. To poor Charlotte's great horror, I chose my plate in the form of an old English tankard, an utensil for which I have a particular respect, especially when charged with good ale, cup, or any of these potables. I hope you will soon see mine.[1]

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[1] The late Sir John Marjoribanks of Lees, Bart.

'Your little friends, Sophia and Walter, were at a magnificent party on Twelfth Night at Dalkeith, where the Duke and Duchess entertained all Edinburgh. I think they have dreamed of nothing since but Aladdin's lamp and the palace of Haroun Alraschid. I am uncertain what to do this spring. I would fain go on the continent for three or four weeks, if it be then safe for non-combatants. If not, we will have a merry meeting in London, and, like Master Silence,

> Eat, drink, and make good cheer,
> And praise heaven for the merry year.[2]

I have much to say about Triermain. The fourth edition is at press. The Empress-Dowager of Russia has expressed such an interest in it, that it will be inscribed to her, in some doggerel sonnet or other, by the unknown author. This is funny enough.—Love a thousand times to dear Mrs. Morritt, who, I trust, keeps pretty well. Pray write soon—a modest request from WALTER SCOTT.'

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[1] The inscription for this tankard was penned by the late celebrated Dr. James Gregory, Professor of the Practice of Physic in the University of Edinburgh; and I therefore transcribe it.

GUALTERUM SCOTT
DE ABBOTSFORD
VIRUM SUMMI INGENII
SCRIPTOREM ELEGANTEM
POETARUM SUI SECULI FACILE PRINCIPEM
PATRIÆ DECUS
OB VARIA ERGA IPSAM MERITA
IN CIVIUM SUORUM NUMERUM
GRATA ADSCRIPSIT CIVITAS EDINBURGENSIS
ET HOC CANTHARO DONAVIT
A. D. M.DCCC.XIII.

[2] 2nd King Henry IV. Act V. Scene 3.

The last of Weber's literary productions were the analyses of the Old German Poems of the *Helden Buch*, and the *Nibelungen Lied*, which appeared in a massive quarto, entitled Illustrations of Northern Antiquities, published in the summer of 1814, by his and Scott's friend, Mr. Robert Jameson. Scott avowedly contributed to this collection an account of the Eyrbiggia Saga, which has since been included in his Prose Miscellanies (Vol. V., edition 1834); but any one who examines the share of the work which goes under Weber's name will see that Scott had a considerable hand in that also. The rhymed versions from the *Nibelungen Lied* came, I can have no doubt, from his pen; but he never reclaimed these, or any other similar benefactions, of which I have traced not a few; nor, highly curious and even beautiful as many of them are, could they be intelligible, if separated from the prose narrative on which Weber embroidered them, in imitation of the style of Ellis's Specimens of Metrical Romance.

The following letters, on the first abdication of Napoleon, are too characteristic to be omitted here. I need not remind the reader how greatly Scott had calmed his opinions, and softened his feelings, respecting the career and fate of the most extraordinary man of our age, before he undertook to write his history.

'*To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., Portland Place, London.*

'ABBOTSFORD, 30*th April* 1814.

'"Joy—joy in London now!"—and in Edinburgh, moreover, my dear Morritt; for never did you or I see, and never again shall we see, according to all human prospects, a consummation so truly glorious, as now bids fair to conclude this long and eventful war. It is startling to think that, but for the preternatural presumption and hardness of heart displayed by the arch-enemy of mankind, we should have had a hollow and ominous truce with him, instead of a glorious and stable peace with the country over which he tyrannized, and its lawful ruler.

But Providence had its own wise purposes to answer—and such was the deference of France to the ruling power—so devoutly did they worship the Devil for possession of his burning throne, that, it may be, nothing short of his rejection of every fair and advantageous offer of peace could have driven them to those acts of resistance which remembrance of former convulsions had rendered so fearful to them. Thank God! it is done at last: and—although I rather grudge him even the mouthful of air which he may draw in the Isle of Elba—yet I question whether the moral lesson would have been completed either by his perishing in battle, or being torn to pieces (which I should greatly have preferred), like the De Witts, by an infuriated crowd of conscripts and their parents. Good God! with what strange feelings must that man retire from the most unbounded authority ever vested in the hands of one man, to the seclusion of privacy and restraint! We have never heard of one good action which he did, at least for which there was not some selfish or political reason; and the train of slaughter, pestilence, and famine and fire, which his ambition has occasioned, would have outweighed five hundredfold the private virtues of a Titus. These are comfortable reflections to carry with one to privacy. If he writes his own history, as he proposes, we may gain something; but he must send it here to be printed. Nothing less than a neck-or-nothing London bookseller, like John Dunton of yore, will venture to commit to the press his strange details uncastrated. I doubt if he has *stamina* to undertake such a labour; and yet, in youth, as I know from the brothers of Lauriston, who were his school-companions, Buonaparte's habits were distinctly and strongly literary. Spain, the Continental System, and the invasion of Russia he may record as his three leading blunders—an awful lesson to sovereigns that morality is not so indifferent to politics as Machiavelians will assert. *Res nolunt diu male administrari.* Why can we not meet to talk over these matters over a glass of claret? and when shall that be? Not this spring, I fear, for time wears fast away, and I have remained here nailed among my future oaks, which I measure daily with a foot-rule. Those which were planted two years ago, begin to look very gaily, and a venerable plantation of four years old looks as *bobbish* as yours at the dairy by Greta side. Besides, I am arranging this cottage a little more conveniently, to put off the plague and expense of building another year; and I assure you, I expect to spare Mrs. Morritt and you a chamber in the wall, with a dressing-room and everything handsome about you. You will not stipulate, of course, for many square feet. You would be surprised to hear how the Continent is awakening from its iron sleep. The utmost eagerness seems to prevail about English literature. I have had several voluntary epistles from different parts of Germany, from men of letters, who are eager to know what we have been doing, while they were compelled to play at blind-man's buff with the *ci-devant Empereur*. The feeling of the French officers, of whom we have many in our vicinity, is very curious, and yet natural.[1] Many of them, companions of Buonaparte's victories, and who hitherto have marched with him from conquest to conquest, disbelieve the change entirely. This is all very stupid to write to you, who are in the centre of these wonders; but what else can I say, unless I should send you the measure of the future fathers of the forest? Mrs. Scott is with me here—the children in Edinburgh. Our kindest love attends Mrs. Morritt. I hope to hear soon that her health continues to gain ground.

'I have a letter from Southey, in high spirits on the glorious news. What a pity this last battle[2] was fought. But I am glad the rascals were beaten once more.—Ever yours, WALTER SCOTT.'

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[1] A good many French officers, prisoners of war, had been living on *parole* in Melrose and the adjoining villages; and Mr. and Mrs. Scott had been particularly kind and hospitable to them.

[2] The battle of Toulouse.

'*To Robert Southey, Esq., Keswick.*

'EDINBURGH, 17*th June* 1814.

'MY DEAR SOUTHEY—I suspended writing to thank you for the Carmen Triumphale—(a happy omen of what you can do to immortalize our public story)—until the feverish mood of expectation and anxiety should be over. And then, as you truly say, there followed a stunning sort of listless astonishment and complication of feeling, which if it did not lessen enjoyment, confused and confounded one's sense of it. I remember the first time I happened to see a launch, I was neither so much struck with the descent of the vessel, nor with its majestic sweep to its moorings, as with the blank which was suddenly made from the withdrawing so large an object, and the prospect which was at once opened to the opposite side of the dock crowded with spectators. Buonaparte's fall strikes me something in the same way: the huge bulk of his power, against which a thousand arms were hammering, was obviously to sink when its main props were struck away—and yet now—when it has disappeared—the vacancy which it leaves in our minds and attention, marks its huge and preponderating importance more strongly than even its presence. Yet I so devoutly expected the termination, that in discussing the matter with Major Philips, who seemed to partake of the doubts which prevailed during the feverish period preceding the capture of Paris, when he was expressing his apprehensions that the capital of France would be defended to the last, I hazarded a prophecy that a battle would be fought on the heights of Mont Martre—(no great sagacity, since it was the point where Marlborough proposed to attack, and for which Saxe projected a scheme of defence)—and that if the allies were successful, which I little doubted, the city would surrender, and the Senate proclaim the dethronement of Buonaparte. But I never thought nor imagined that he would have *given in* as he has done. I always considered him as possessing the genius and talents of an Eastern conqueror; and although I never supposed that he possessed, allowing for some difference of education, the liberality of conduct and political views which were sometimes exhibited by old Hyder Ally, yet I did think he might have shown the same resolved and dogged spirit of resolution which induced Tippoo Saib to die manfully upon the breach of his capital city with his sabre clenched in his hand. But this is a poor devil, and cannot play the tyrant so rarely as Bottom the Weaver proposed to do. I think it is Strap in Roderick Random, who seeing a highwayman that had lately robbed him, disarmed and bound, fairly offers to box him for a shilling. One has really the same feeling with respect to Buonaparte, though if he go out of life after all in the usual manner, it will be the strongest proof of his own insignificance, and the liberality of the age we live in. Were I a son of Palm or Hoffer, I should be tempted to take a long shot at him in his retreat to Elba. As for coaxing the French by restoring all our conquests, it would be driving generosity into extravagance: most of them have been colonized with British subjects, and improved by British capital; and surely we owe no more to the French nation than any well-meaning individual might owe to a madman, whom—at the expense of a hard struggle, black eyes, and bruises—he has at length overpowered, knocked down, and by the wholesome discipline of a bull's pizzle and strait jacket, brought to the handsome enjoyment of his senses. I think with you, what we return to them should be well paid for; and they should have no Pondicherry to be a nest of smugglers, nor Mauritius to nurse a hornet-swarm of privateers. In short, draw teeth, and pare claws, and leave them to fatten themselves in peace and quiet, when they are deprived of the means of indulging their restless spirit of enterprise.

'——The above was written at Abbotsford last month, but left in my portfolio there till my return some days ago; and now, when I look over what I have written, I am confirmed in my opinion that we have given the rascals too good an opportunity to boast that they have got well off. An intimate friend of mine,[1] just returned from a long captivity in France, witnessed the entry of the King, guarded by the Imperial Guards, whose countenances betokened the most sullen and ferocious discontent. The mob, and especially the women, pelted them for refusing to cry "Vive le Roi." If Louis is well advised, he will get rid of these fellows gradually, but as soon as possible. "Joy, joy in London now!" What a scene has been going on there! I think you may see the Czar appear on the top of one of your stages one morning. He is a fine fellow, and has fought the good fight.—Yours affectionately, WALTER SCOTT.'

On the 1st of July 1814, Scott's Life and Edition of Swift, in nineteen volumes 8vo, at length issued from the press. This adventure, undertaken by Constable in 1808, had been proceeded in during all the variety of their personal relations, and now came forth when author and publisher felt more warmly towards each other than perhaps they had ever before done. The impression was of 1250 copies; and a reprint of similar extent was called for in 1824. The Life of Swift has subsequently been included in the author's Miscellanies, and has obtained a very wide circulation.

By his industrious enquiries, in which, as the preface gratefully acknowledges, he found many zealous assistants, especially among the Irish literati,[2] Scott added to this edition many admirable pieces, both in prose and verse, which had never before been printed, and still more which had escaped notice amidst old bundles of pamphlets and broadsides. To the illustration of these and of all the better known writings of the Dean, he brought the same qualifications which had, by general consent, distinguished his Dryden, 'uniting,' as the Edinburgh Review expresses it, 'to the minute knowledge and patient research of the Malones and Chalmerses, a vigour of judgment and a vivacity of style to which they had no pretensions.' His biographical narrative, introductory essays, and notes on Swift, show, indeed, an intimacy of acquaintance with the obscurest details of the political, social, and literary history of the period of Queen Anne, which it is impossible to consider without feeling a lively regret that he never accomplished a long-cherished purpose of preparing a Life and Edition of Pope on a similar scale. It has been specially unfortunate for that 'true deacon of the craft,' as Scott often called Pope, that first Goldsmith, and then Scott, should have taken up, only to abandon it, the project of writing his life and editing his works.

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[1] Sir Adam Fergusson, who had been taken prisoner in the course of the Duke of Wellington's retreat from Burgos.

[2] The names which he particularly mentions are those of the late Matthew Weld Hartstonge, Esq., of Dublin, Theophilus Swift, Esq., Major Tickell, Thomas Steele, Esq., Leonard Macnally, Esq., and the Rev. M. Berwick.

The Edinburgh Reviewer thus characterises Scott's Memoir of the Dean of St. Patrick's :—

> It is not everywhere extremely well written, in a literary point of view, but it is drawn up in substance with great intelligence, liberality, and good feeling. It is quite fair and moderate in politics; and perhaps rather too indulgent and tender towards individuals of all descriptions—more full, at least, of kindness and veneration for genius and social virtue, than of indignation at baseness and profligacy. Altogether, it is not much like the production of a mere man of letters, or a fastidious speculator in sentiment and morality; but exhibits throughout, and in a very pleasing form, the good sense and large toleration of a man of the world, with much of that generous allowance for the
>
> Fears of the brave and follies of the wise,
>
> which genius too often requires, and should therefore always be most forward to show. It is impossible, however, to avoid noticing that Mr. Scott is by far too favourable to the personal character of his author, whom we think it would really be injurious to the cause of morality to allow to pass either as a very dignified or a very amiable person. The truth is, we think, that he was extremely ambitious, arrogant, and selfish; of a morose, vindictive, and haughty temper; and though capable of a sort of patronising generosity towards his dependents, and of some attachment towards those who had long known and flattered him, his general demeanour, both in public and private life, appears to have been far from exemplary; destitute of temper and magnanimity, and we will add, of principle, in the former; and in the latter, of tenderness, fidelity, or compassion.—Edinburgh Review, vol. xvii. p. 9.

I have no desire to break a lance in this place in defence of the personal character of Swift. It does not appear to me that he stands at all distinguished among politicians (least of all, among the politicians of his time) for laxity of principle; nor can I consent to charge his private demeanour with the absence either of tenderness, or fidelity, or compassion. But who ever dreamed—most assuredly not Scott—of holding up the Dean of St. Patrick's as on the whole an 'exemplary character'? The biographer felt, whatever his critic may have thought on the subject, that a vein of morbid humour ran through Swift's whole existence, both mental and physical, from the beginning. 'He early adopted,' says Scott, 'the custom of observing his birthday, as a term not of joy but of sorrow, and of reading, when it annually recurred, the striking passage of Scripture in which Job laments and execrates the day upon which it was said in his father's house *that a man-child was born*'; and I should have expected that any man who had considered the black close of the career thus early clouded, and read the entry of Swift's diary on the funeral of Stella, his epitaph on himself, and the testament by which he disposed of his fortune, would have been willing, like Scott, to dwell on the splendour of his immortal genius, and the many traits of manly generosity 'which he unquestionably exhibited,' rather than on the faults and foibles of nameless and inscrutable disease, which tormented and embittered the far greater part of his earthly being. What the critic says of the practical and business-like style of Scott's biography, appears very just—and I think the circumstance eminently characteristic—nor, on the whole, could his edition, as an edition, have been better dealt with than in the Essay which I have quoted. It was, by the way, written by Mr. Jeffrey, at Constable's particular request. 'It was, I think, the first time I ever asked such a thing of him,' the bookseller said to me; 'and I assure you the result was no encouragement to repeat such petitions.' Mr. Jeffrey attacked Swift's whole character at great length, and with consummate dexterity; and, in Constable's opinion, his article threw such a cloud on the Dean as materially checked, for a time, the popularity of his writings. Admirable as the paper is, in point of ability, I think Mr. Constable may have considerably exaggerated its effects; but in those days it must have been difficult for him to form an impartial opinion upon such a question; for, as Johnson said of Cave, that 'he could not spit over his window without thinking of The Gentleman's Magazine,' I believe Constable allowed nothing to interrupt his paternal pride in the concerns of his Review, until the Waverley Novels supplied him with another periodical publication still more important to his fortunes.

And this consummation was not long delayed: a considerable addition having by that time been made to the original fragment, there appeared in The Scots Magazine for February 1st, 1814, an announcement that 'Waverley; or, 'tis Sixty Years Since, a novel, in 3 vols. 12mo,' would be published in March. And before Scott came into Edinburgh, at the close of the Christmas vacation, on the 12th of January, Mr. Erskine had perused the greater part of the first volume, and expressed his decided opinion that Waverley would prove the most popular of all his friend's writings.[1] The MS. was forthwith copied by John Ballantyne, and sent to press. As soon as a volume was printed, Ballantyne conveyed it to Constable, who did not for a moment doubt from what pen it proceeded, but took a few days to consider the matter, and then offered £700 for the copyright. When we recollect what the state of novel literature in those days was, and that the only exceptions to its mediocrity, the Irish Tales of Miss Edgeworth, however appreciated in refined circles, had a circulation so limited that she had never realized a tithe of £700 by the best of them—it must be allowed that Constable's offer was a liberal one. Scott's answer, however, transmitted through the same channel, was, that £700 was too much, in case the novel should not be successful, and too little in case it should. He added, 'If our fat friend had said £1000, I should have been staggered.' John did not forget to hint this last circumstance to Constable, but the latter did not choose to act upon it; and he ultimately published the work, on the footing of an equal division of profits between himself and the author. There was a considerable pause between the finishing of the first volume and the beginning of the second. Constable had, in 1812, acquired the copyright of the Encyclopædia Britannica, and was now preparing to publish the valuable Supplement to that work, which has since, with modifications, been incorporated into its text. He earnestly requested Scott to undertake a few articles for the Supplement; he agreed—and, anxious to gratify the generous bookseller, at once laid aside his tale until he had finished two essays—those on Chivalry and the Drama. They appear to have been completed in the course of April and May, and he received for each of them—as he did subsequently for that on Romance—£100.

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[1] Entertaining one night a small party of friends, Erskine read the proof sheets of this volume after supper, and was confirmed in his opinion by the enthusiastic interest they excited in his highly intelligent circle. Mr. James Simpson and Mr. Norman Hill, advocates, were of this party, and from the way in which their host spoke, they both inferred that they were listening to the first effort of some unknown aspirant. They all pronounced the work one of the highest classical merit. The sitting was protracted till daybreak.—[1839.]

The two next letters will give us, in more exact detail than the author's own recollection could supply in 1830, the history of the completion of Waverley. It was published on the 7th of July; and two days afterwards he thus writes:—

'*To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., M.P., London.*

'EDINBURGH, *9th July* 1814.

'MY DEAR MORRITT—I owe you many apologies for not sooner answering your very entertaining letter upon your Parisian journey. I heartily wish I had been of your party, for you have seen what I trust will not be seen again in a hurry; since, to enjoy the delight of a restoration, there is a necessity for a previous *bouleversement* of everything that is valuable in morals and policy, which seems to have been the case in France since 1790.[1] The Duke of Buccleuch told me yesterday of a very good reply of Louis to some of his attendants, who proposed shutting the doors of his apartments to keep out the throng of people. "Open the door," he said, "to John Bull; he has suffered a great deal in keeping the door open for me."

'Now, to go from one important subject to another, I must account for my own laziness, which I do by referring you to a small anonymous sort of a novel, in three volumes, Waverley, which you will receive by the mail of this day. It was a very old attempt of mine to embody some traits of those characters and manners peculiar to Scotland, the last remnants of which vanished during my own youth, so that few or no traces now remain. I had written great part of the first volume, and sketched other passages, when I mislaid the MS., and only found it by the merest accident as I was rummaging the drawers of an old cabinet; and I took the fancy of finishing it, which I did so fast, that the last two volumes were written in three weeks. I had a great deal of fun in the accomplishment of this task, though I do not expect that it will be popular in the south, as much of the humour, if there be any, is local, and some of it even professional. You, however, who are an adopted Scotchman, will find some amusement in it. It has made a very strong impression here, and the good people of Edinburgh are busied in tracing the author, and in finding out originals for the portraits it contains. In the first case, they will probably find it difficult to convict the guilty author, although he is far from escaping suspicion. Jeffrey has offered to make oath that it is mine, and another great critic has tendered his affidavit *ex contrario*; so that these authorities have divided the Gude Town. However, the thing has succeeded very well, and is thought highly of. I don't know if it has got to London yet. I intend to maintain my *incognito*. Let me know your opinion about it. I should be most happy if I could think it would amuse a painful thought at this anxious moment. I was in hopes Mrs. Morritt was getting so much better, that this relapse affects me very much.—Ever yours truly,

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[1] Mr. Morritt had, in the spring of this year, been present at the first levee held at the Tuileries by Monsieur (afterwards Charles X.), as representative of his brother Louis XVIII. Mr. M. had not been in Paris till that time since 1789.

'W. Scott.

'*P.S.*—As your conscience has very few things to answer for, you must still burthen it with the secret of the Bridal. It is spreading very rapidly, and I have one or two little fairy romances, which will make a second volume, and which I would wish published, but not with my name. The truth is, that this sort of muddling work amuses me, and I am something in the condition of Joseph Surface, who was embarrassed by getting himself too good a reputation; for many things may please people well enough anonymously, which, if they have me in the title-page, would just give me that sort of ill name which precedes hanging—and that would be in many respects inconvenient if I thought of again trying a *grande opus*.'

This statement of the foregoing letter (repeated still more precisely in the following one), as to the time occupied in the composition of the second and third volumes of Waverley, recalls to my memory a trifling anecdote, which, as connected with a dear friend of my youth, whom I have not seen for many years, and may very probably never see again in this world, I shall here set down, in the hope of affording him a momentary, though not an unmixed pleasure, when he may chance to read this compilation on a distant shore—and also in the hope that my humble record may impart to some active mind in the rising generation a shadow of the influence which the reality certainly exerted upon his. Happening to pass through Edinburgh in June 1814, I dined one day with the gentleman in question (now the Honourable William Menzies, one of the Supreme Judges at the Cape of Good Hope), whose residence was then in George

Street, situated very near to, and at right angles with, North Castle Street. It was a party of very young persons, most of them, like Menzies and myself, destined for the Bar of Scotland, all gay and thoughtless, enjoying the first flush of manhood, with little remembrance of the yesterday, or care of the morrow. When my companion's worthy father and uncle, after seeing two or three bottles go round, left the juveniles to themselves, the weather being hot, we adjourned to a library which had one large window looking northwards. After carousing here for an hour or more, I observed that a shade had come over the aspect of my friend, who happened to be placed immediately opposite to myself, and said something that intimated a fear of his being unwell. 'No,' said he, 'I shall be well enough presently, if you will only let me sit where you are, and take my chair; for there is a confounded hand in sight of me here, which has often bothered me before, and now it won't let me fill my glass with a good will.' I rose to change places with him accordingly, and he pointed out to me this hand which, like the writing on Belshazzar's wall, disturbed his hour of hilarity. 'Since we sat down,' he said, 'I have been watching it—it fascinates my eye—it never stops—page after page is finished and thrown on that heap of MS., and still it goes on unwearied—and so it will be till candles are brought in, and God knows how long after that. It is the same every night—I can't stand a sight of it when I am not at my books.'—'Some stupid, dogged, engrossing clerk, probably,' exclaimed myself, or some other giddy youth in our society. 'No, boys,' said our host, 'I well know what hand it is—'tis Walter Scott's.' This was the hand that, in the evenings of three summer weeks, wrote the last two volumes of Waverley. Would that all who that night watched it had profited by its example of diligence as largely as William Menzies!

In the next of these letters Scott enclosed to Mr. Morritt the Prospectus of a new edition of the old poems of the Bruce and the Wallace, undertaken by the learned lexicographer, Dr. John Jamieson; and he announces his departure on a sailing excursion round the north of Scotland. It will be observed, that when Scott began his letter, he had only had Mr. Morritt's opinion of the first volume of Waverley, and that before he closed it, he had received his friend's honest criticism on the work as a whole, with the expression of an earnest hope that he would drop his *incognito* on the title-page of a second edition.

'*J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., M.P., Portland Place, London.*

'ABBOTSFORD, *July* 24, 1814.

'MY DEAR MORRITT—I am going to say my *vales* to you for some weeks, having accepted an invitation from a committee of the Commissioners for the Northern Lights (I don't mean the Edinburgh Reviewers, but the *bona fide* Commissioners for the Beacons), to accompany them upon a nautical tour round Scotland, visiting all that is curious on continent and isle. The party are three gentlemen with whom I am very well acquainted, William Erskine being one. We have a stout cutter, well fitted up and manned for the service by Government; and to make assurance double sure, the admiral has sent a sloop of war to cruise in the dangerous points of our tour, and sweep the sea of the Yankee privateers, which sometimes annoy our northern latitudes. I shall visit the Clephanes in their solitude—and let you know all that I see that is rare and entertaining, which, as we are masters of our time and vessel, should add much to my stock of knowledge.

'As to Waverley, I will play Sir Fretful for once, and assure you that I left the story to flag in the first volume on purpose; the second and third have rather more bustle and interest. I wished (with what success, Heaven knows) to avoid the ordinary error of novel writers, whose first volume is usually their best. But since it has served to amuse Mrs. Morritt and you *usque ab initio*, I have no doubt you will tolerate it even unto the end. It may really boast to be a tolerably faithful portrait of Scottish manners, and has been recognised as such in Edinburgh. The first edition of a thousand instantly disappeared, and the bookseller informs me that the second, of double the quantity, will not supply the market long.—As I shall be very anxious to know how Mrs. Morritt is, I hope to have a few lines from you on my return, which will be about the end of August or beginning of September. I should have mentioned that we have the celebrated engineer, Stevenson, along with us. I delight in these professional men of talent; they always give you some new lights by the peculiarity of their habits and studies, so different from the people who are rounded, and smoothed, and ground down for conversation, and who can say all that every other person says, and—nothing more.

'What a miserable thing it is that our royal family cannot be quiet and decent at least, if not correct and moral in their deportment. Old farmer George's manly simplicity, modesty of expense, and domestic virtue, saved this country at its most perilous crisis; for it is inconceivable the number of persons whom these qualities united in his behalf, who would have felt but feebly the abstract duty of supporting a crown less worthily worn.

'—I had just proceeded thus far when your kind favour of the 21st reached Abbotsford. I am heartily glad you continued to like Waverley to the end. The hero is a sneaking piece of imbecility; and if he had married Flora, she would have set him up upon the chimneypiece, as Count Borowlaski's wife used to do with him.[1] I am a bad hand at depicting a hero properly so called, and have an unfortunate propensity for the dubious characters of borderers, buccaneers, Highland robbers, and all others of a Robin-Hood description. I do not know why it should be, as I am myself, like Hamlet, indifferent honest; but I suppose the blood of the old cattle-drivers of Teviotdale continues to stir in my veins.

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[1] *Count Borowlaski* was a Polish dwarf, who, after realizing some money as an itinerant object of exhibition, settled, married, and died (Sept. 5, 1837) at Durham. He was a well-bred creature, and much noticed by the clergy and other gentry of that city. Indeed, even when travelling the country as a show, he had always maintained a sort of dignity. I remember him as going from house to house, when I was a child, in a sedan chair, with a servant in livery following him, who took the fee—*M. le Comte* himself (dressed in a scarlet coat and bag wig) being ushered into the room like any ordinary visitor.

The Count died in his 99th year—

> A SPIRIT brave, yet gentle, has dwelt, as it appears,
> Within three feet of flesh for near one hundred years;
> Which causes wonder, like his constitution, strong,
> That one *so short alive* should be *alive so long!*
>
> Bentley's Miscellany for November 1837.

'I shall *not* own Waverley; my chief reason is, that it would prevent me of the pleasure of writing again. David Hume, nephew of the historian, says the author must be of a Jacobite family and predilections, a yeoman-cavalry man, and a Scottish lawyer, and desires me to guess in whom these happy attributes are united. I shall not plead guilty, however; and as such seems to be the fashion of the day, I hope charitable people will believe my *affidavit* in contradiction to all other evidence. The Edinburgh faith now is, that Waverley is written by Jeffrey, having been composed to lighten the tedium of his late transatlantic voyage. So you see the unknown infant is like to come to preferment. In truth, I am not sure it would be considered quite decorous for me as a Clerk of Session to write novels. Judges being monks, Clerks are a sort of lay brethren, from whom some solemnity of walk and conduct may be expected. So, whatever I may do of this kind, "I shall whistle it down the wind, and let it prey at fortune."[1] I will take care, in the next edition, to make the corrections you recommend. The second is, I believe, nearly through the press. It will hardly be printed faster than it was written; for though the first volume was begun long ago, and actually lost for a time, yet the other two were begun and finished between the 4th June and the 1st July, during all which I attended my duty in Court, and proceeded without loss of time or hinderance of business.

'I wish, for poor auld Scotland's sake,[2] and for the manes of Bruce and Wallace, and for the living comfort of a very worthy and ingenious dissenting clergyman, who has collected a library and medals of some value, and brought up, I believe, sixteen or seventeen children (his wife's ambition extended to twenty) upon about £150 a year—I say I wish, for all these reasons, you could get me among your wealthy friends a name or two for the enclosed proposals. The price is, I think, too high; but the booksellers fixed it two guineas above what I proposed. I trust it will be yet lowered to five guineas, which is a more come-at-able sum than six. The poems themselves are great curiosities, both to the philologist and antiquary; and that of Bruce is invaluable even to the historian. They have been hitherto wretchedly edited.

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[1] Othello, Act III. Scene 3.

[2] Burns—lines 'On my early days.'

'I am glad you are not to pay for this scrawl.—Ever yours, WALTER SCOTT.

'*P.S.*—I do not see how my silence can be considered as imposing on the public. If I give my name to a book without writing it, unquestionably that would be a trick. But, unless in the case of his averring facts which he may be called upon to defend or justify, I think an author may use his own discretion in giving or withholding his name. Harry Mackenzie never put his name in a title-page till the last edition of his works; and Swift only owned one out of his thousand and one publications. In point of emolument, everybody knows that I sacrifice much money by withholding my name; and what should I gain by it, that any human being has a right to consider as an unfair advantage? In fact, only the freedom of writing trifles with less personal responsibility, and perhaps more frequently than I otherwise might do. W. S.'

I am not able to give the exact date of the following reply to one of John Ballantyne's expostulations on the subject of *the secret*:—

No, John, I will not own the book—
I won't, you Piccaroon.
When next I try St. Grubby's brook,
The A. of Wa— shall bait the hook—
And flat-fish bite as soon,
As if before them they had got
The worn-out wriggler.

WALTER SCOTT.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Voyage to the Shetland Isles, etc.—Scott's Diary kept on board the Lighthouse Yacht

JULY AND AUGUST 1814

THE gallant composure with which Scott, when he had dismissed a work from his desk, awaited the decision of the public—and the healthy elasticity of spirit with which he could meanwhile turn his whole zeal upon new or different objects—are among the features in his character which will always, I believe, strike the student of literary history as most remarkable. We have now seen him before the fate of Waverley had been determined—before he had heard a word about its reception in England, except from one partial confidant—preparing to start on a voyage to the northern isles, which was likely to occupy the best part of two months, and in the course of which he could hardly expect to receive any intelligence from his friends in Edinburgh. The diary which he kept during this expedition is—thanks to the leisure of a landsman on board—a very full one; and, written without the least notion probably that it would ever be perused except in his own family circle, it affords such a complete and artless portraiture of the man, as he was in himself, and as he mingled with his friends and companions, at one of the most interesting periods of his life, that I am persuaded every reader will be pleased to see it printed in its original state. A few extracts from it were published by himself, in one of the Edinburgh Annual Registers—he also drew from it some of the notes to his Lord of the Isles, and the substance of several others for his romance of the Pirate. But the recurrence of these detached passages will not be complained of—expounded and illustrated as the reader will find them by the personal details of the context.

I have been often told by one of the companions of this voyage, that heartily as Scott entered throughout into their social enjoyments, they all perceived him, when inspecting for the first time scenes of remarkable grandeur, to be in such an abstracted and excited mood, that they felt it would be the kindest and discreetest plan to leave him to himself. 'I often,' said Lord Kinnedder, 'on coming up from the cabin at night, found him pacing the deck rapidly, muttering to himself—and went to the forecastle, lest my presence should disturb him. I remember, that at Loch Corriskin, in particular, he seemed quite overwhelmed with his feelings; and we all saw it, and retiring unnoticed, left him to roam and gaze about by himself, until it was time to muster the party and be gone.' Scott used to mention the surprise with which he himself witnessed Erskine's emotion on first entering the Cave of Staffa—'Would you believe it?' he said—'my poor Willie sat down and wept like a woman!' Yet his own sensibilities, though betrayed in a more masculine and sterner guise, were perhaps as keen as well as deeper than his amiable friend's.

The poet's Diary, contained in five little paper-books, is as follows:—

'VACATION, 1814.

'*Voyage in the Lighthouse Yacht to Nova Zembla,*
and the Lord knows where.

'*July 29th*, 1814.—Sailed from Leith about one o'clock on board the Lighthouse Yacht, conveying six guns, and ten men, commanded by Mr. Wilson. The company—Commissioners of the Northern Lights; Robert Hamilton, Sheriff of Lanarkshire; William Erskine, Sheriff of

Orkney and Zetland; Adam Duff, Sheriff of Forfarshire. Non-Commissioners—Ipse Ego; Mr. David Marjoribanks, son to John Marjoribanks, Provost of Edinburgh, a young gentleman; Rev. Mr. Turnbull, minister of Tingwall, in the presbytery of Shetland. But the official chief of the expedition is Mr. Stevenson, the Surveyor-Viceroy over the Commissioners—a most gentlemanlike and modest man, and well known by his scientific skill.

'Reached the Isle of May in the evening; went ashore, and saw the light—an old tower, and much in the form of a border-keep, with a beacon-grate on the top. It is to be abolished for an oil revolving-light, the grate-fire only being ignited upon the leeward side when the wind is very high. *Quære*—Might not the grate revolve? The isle had once a cell or two upon it. The vestiges of the chapel are still visible. Mr. Stevenson proposed demolishing the old tower, and I recommended *ruining* it *à la picturesque*—*i.e.* demolishing it partially. The island might be made a delightful residence for sea-bathers.

'On board again in the evening: watched the progress of the ship round Fifeness, and the revolving motion of the now distant Bell-Rock light until the wind grew rough, and the landsmen sick. To bed at eleven, and slept sound.

'30*th July*.—Waked at six by the steward: summoned to visit the Bell-Rock, where the beacon is well worthy attention. Its dimensions are well known; but no description can give the idea of this slight, solitary, round tower, trembling amid the billows, and fifteen miles from Arbroath, the nearest shore. The fitting up within is not only handsome, but elegant. All work of wood (almost) is wainscot; all hammer-work brass; in short, exquisitely fitted up. You enter by a ladder of rope, with wooden steps, about thirty feet from the bottom, where the mason-work ceases to be solid, and admits of round apartments. The lowest is a storehouse for the people's provisions, water, etc.; above that a storehouse for the lights, of oil, etc.; then the kitchen of the people, three in number; then their sleeping chamber; then the saloon or parlour, a neat little room; above all, the lighthouse;

all communicating by oaken ladders, with brass rails, most handsomely and conveniently executed. Breakfasted in the parlour.[1] On board again at nine, and run down, through a rough sea, to Aberbrothock, vulgarly called Arbroath. All sick, even Mr. Stevenson. God grant this occur seldom! Landed and dined at Arbroath, where we were to take up Adam Duff. We visited the appointments of the lighthouse establishment—a handsome tower, with two wings. These contain the lodgings of the keepers of the light—very handsome, indeed, and very clean. They might be thought too handsome, were it not of consequence to give those men, intrusted with a duty so laborious and slavish, a consequence in the eyes of the public and in their own. The central part of the building forms a single tower, corresponding with the lighthouse. As the keepers' families live here, they are apprised each morning by a signal that *all is well.* If this signal be not made, a tender sails for the rock directly. I visited the abbey church for the third time, the first being—*eheu!*[2]—the second with T. Thomson. Dined at Arbroath, and came on board at night, where I made up this foolish journal, and now beg for wine and water. So the vessel is once more in motion.

'*31st July.*—Waked at seven; vessel off Fowlsheugh and Dunnottar. Fair wind, and delightful day; glide enchantingly along the coast of Kincardineshire, and open the bay of Nigg about ten. At eleven, off Aberdeen; the gentlemen go ashore to Girdle-Ness, a projecting point of rock to the east of the harbour of Foot-Dee. There the magistrates of Aberdeen wish to have a fort and beacon-light. The Oscar, whaler, was lost here last year, with all her hands, excepting two; about forty perished. Dreadful, to be wrecked so near a large and populous town! The view of Old and New Aberdeen from the sea is quite beautiful. About noon, proceed along the coast of Aberdeenshire, which, to the northwards, changes from a bold and rocky to a low and sandy character. Along the bay of Belhelvie, a whole parish was swallowed up by the shifting sands, and is still a desolate waste. It belonged to the Earls of Errol, and was rented at £500 a year at the time. When these sands are past, the land is all arable. Not a tree to be seen; nor a grazing cow, or sheep, or even a labour-horse at grass, though this be Sunday. The next remarkable object was a fragment of the old castle of Slains, on a precipitous bank, overlooking the sea. The fortress was destroyed when James VI. marched north [A.D. 1594], after the battle of Glenlivat, to reduce Huntly and Errol to obedience. The family then removed to their present mean habitation, for such it seems, a collection of low houses forming a quadrangle, one side of which is built on the very verge of the precipice that overhangs the ocean. What seems odd, there are no stairs down to the beach. Imprudence, or ill fortune as fatal as the sands of Belhelvie, has swallowed up the estate of Errol, excepting this dreary mansion-house, and a farm or two adjoining. We took to the boat, and running along the coast, had some delightful sea-views to the northward of the castle. The coast is here very rocky; but the rocks, being rather soft, are wasted and corroded by the constant action of the waves,—and the fragments which remain, where the softer parts have been washed away, assume the appearance of old Gothic ruins. There are open arches, towers, steeples, and so forth. One part of this scaur is called *Dun Buy*, being coloured yellow by the dung of the sea-fowls, who build there in the most surprising numbers. We caught three young gulls. But the most curious object was the celebrated Buller of Buchan, a huge rocky cauldron, into which the sea rushes through a natural arch of rock. I walked round the top; in one place the path is only about two feet wide, and a monstrous precipice on either side. We then rowed into the cauldron or buller from beneath, and saw nothing around us but a regular wall of black rock, and nothing above but the blue sky. A fishing hamlet had sent out its inhabitants, who, gazing from the brink, looked like sylphs looking down upon gnomes. In the side of the cauldron opens a deep black cavern. Johnson says it might be a retreat from storms, which is nonsense. In a high gale the waves rush in with incredible violence. An old fisher said he had seen them flying over the natural wall of the buller, which cannot be less than 200 feet high. Same old man says Slains is now inhabited by a Mr. Bowles, who comes so far from the southward that naebody kens whare he comes frae. "Was he frae the Indies?"—"Na; he did not think he came that road. He was far frae the southland. Naebody ever heard the name of the place; but he had brought more guid out o' Peterhead than a' the Lords he had seen in Slains, and he had seen three." About half-past five we left this interesting spot, and after a hard pull, reached the yacht. Weather falls hazy, and rather calm; but at sea we observe vessels enjoying more wind. Pass Peterhead, dimly distinguishing two steeples, and a good many masts. Mormounthill said to resemble a coffin—a likeness of which we could not judge, Mormount being for the present invisible. Pass Rattray-Head: near this cape are dangerous shelves, called the Bridge of Rattray. Here the wreck of the Doris merchant vessel came on shore, lost last year with a number of passengers for Shetland. We lie off all night.

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[1] On being requested, while at breakfast, to inscribe his name in the album of the tower, Scott penned immediately the following lines:—

PHAROS LOQUITUR.

Far in the bosom of the deep,
O'er these wild shelves my watch I keep;
A ruddy gem of changeful light,
Bound on the dusky brow of night,
The seaman bids my lustre hail,
And scorns to strike his timorous sail.

[2] This is, without doubt, an allusion to some happy day's excursion when his *first love* was of the party.

'*1st August.*—Off Fraserburgh—a neat little town. Mr. Stevenson and the Commissioners go on shore to look at a light maintained there upon an old castle, on a cape called Kinnaird's Head. The morning being rainy, and no object of curiosity ashore, I remain on board, to make up my journal, and write home.

'The old castle, now bearing the light, is a picturesque object from the sea. It was the baronial mansion of the Frasers, now Lords Saltoun—an old square tower with a minor fortification towards the landing-place on the sea-side. About eleven, the Commissioners came off, and we leave this town, the extreme point of the Moray Firth, to stretch for Shetland—salute the castle with three guns, and stretch out with a merry gale. See Mormount, a long flattish-topped hill near to the West Trouphead, and another bold cliff promontory projecting into the firth. Our gale soon failed, and we are now all but becalmed; songs, ballads, recitations, backgammon, and piquet, for the rest of the day. Noble sunset and moon rising; we are now out of sight of land.

'2nd *August.*—At sea in the mouth of the Moray Firth. This day almost a blank—light baffling airs, which do us very little good; most of the landsmen sick, more or less; piquet, backgammon, and chess, the only resources. —*P.M.* A breeze, and we begin to think we have passed the Fair Isle, lying between Shetland and Orkney, at which it was our intention to have touched. In short, like one of Sinbad's adventures, we have run on till neither captain nor pilot know exactly where we are. The breeze increases—weather may be called rough; worse and worse after we are in our berths, nothing but booming, trampling, and whizzing of waves about our ears, and ever and anon, as we fall asleep, our ribs come in contact with those of the vessel; hail Duff and the Udaller[1] in the after-cabin, but they are too sick to answer. Towards morning, calm (comparative), and a nap.

'3rd *August.*—At sea as before; no appearance of land; proposed that the Sheriff of Zetland do issue a *meditatione fugæ* warrant against his territories, which seem to fly from us. Pass two whalers; speak the nearest, who had come out of Lerwick, which is about twenty miles distant; stand on with a fine breeze. About nine at night, with moonlight and strong twilight, we weather the point of Bardhead, and enter a channel about three-quarters of a mile broad, which forms the southern entrance to the harbour of Lerwick, where we cast anchor about half-past ten, and put Mr. Turnbull on shore.

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[1] Erskine—Sheriff of Shetland and Orkney.

'*4th August.*—Harbour of Lerwick. Admire the excellence of this harbour of the metropolis of Shetland. It is a most beautiful place, screened on all sides from the wind by hills of a gentle elevation. The town, a fishing village built irregularly upon a hill ascending from the shore, has a picturesque appearance. On the left is Fort Charlotte, garrisoned of late by two companies of veterans. The Greenlandmen, of which nine fine vessels are lying in the harbour, add much to the liveliness of the scene. Mr. Duncan, sheriff-substitute, came off to pay his respects to his principal; he is married to a daughter of my early acquaintance, Walter Scott of Scotshall. We go ashore. Lerwick, a poor-looking place, the streets flagged instead of being causewayed, for there are no wheel-carriages. The streets full of drunken riotous sailors, from the whale-vessels. It seems these ships take about 1000 sailors from Zetland every year, and return them as they come back from the fishery. Each sailor may gain from £20 to £30, which is paid by the merchants of Lerwick, who have agencies from the owners of the whalers in England. The whole return may be between £25,000 and £30,000. These Zetlanders, as they get a part of this pay on landing, make a point of treating their English messmates, who get drunk of course, and are very riotous. The Zetlanders themselves do *not* get drunk, but go straight home to their houses, and reserve their hilarity for the winter season, when they spend their wages in dancing and drinking. Erskine finds employment as Sheriff, for the neighbourhood of the fort enables him to make *main forte*, and secure a number of the rioters. We visit F. Charlotte, which is a neat little fort mounting ten heavy guns to the sea, but only one to the land. Major F., the Governor, showed us the fort; it commands both entrances of the harbour: the north entrance is not very good, but the south capital. The water in the harbour is very deep, as frigates of the smaller class lie almost close to the shore. Take a walk with Captain M'Diarmid, a gentlemanlike and intelligent officer of the garrison; we visit a small fresh-water loch called *Cleik-him-in ;* it borders on the sea, from which it is only divided by a sort of beach, apparently artificial: though the sea lashes the outside of this beach, the water of the lake is not brackish. In this lake are the remains of a Picts' Castle, but ruinous. The people think the Castle has not been built on a natural island, but on an artificial one formed by a heap of stones. These Duns or Picts' Castles are so small, it is impossible to conceive what effectual purpose they could serve excepting a temporary refuge for the chief.—Leave *Cleik-him-in*, and proceed along the coast. The ground is dreadfully encumbered with stones; the patches which have been sown with oats and barley, bear very good crops, but they are mere *patches*, the cattle and ponies feeding amongst them, and secured by tethers. The houses most wretched, worse than the worst herd's house I ever saw. It would be easy to form a good farm by enclosing the ground with Galloway dykes, which would answer the purpose of clearing it at the same time of stones; and as there is plenty of lime-shell, marle, and alga-marina, manure could not be wanting. But there are several obstacles to improvement, chiefly the undivided state of the properties, which lie *run-rig ;* then the claims of Lord Dundas, the lord of the country, and above all, perhaps, the state of the common people, who, dividing their attention between the fishery and the cultivation, are not much interested in the latter, and are often absent at the proper times of labour. Their ground is chiefly dug with the spade, and their ploughs are beyond description awkward. An odd custom prevails—any person, without exception (if I understand rightly), who wishes to raise a few kail, fixes upon any spot he pleases, encloses it with a dry stone wall, uses it as a kail-yard till he works out the soil, then deserts it and makes another. Some dozen of these little enclosures, about twenty or thirty feet square, are in sight at once. They are called *planty-cruives ;* and the Zetlanders are so far from reckoning this an invasion, or a favour on the part of the proprietor, that their most exaggerated description of an avaricious person is one who would refuse liberty for a *planty-cruive;* or to infer the greatest contempt of another, they will say, they would not hold a *planty-cruive* of him. It is needless to notice how much this licence must interfere with cultivation.

'Leaving the *cultivated* land, we turn more inland, and pass two or three small lakes. The muirs are mossy and sterile in the highest degree; the hills are clad with stunted heather, intermixed with huge great stones; much of an astringent root with a yellow flower, called *Tormentil*, used by the islanders in dressing leather in lieu of the oak bark. We climbed a hill, about three miles from Lerwick, to a cairn which presents a fine view of the indented coast of the island, and the distant isles of Mousa and others. Unfortunately the day is rather hazy—return by a circuitous route, through the same sterile country. These muirs are used as a commonty by the proprietors of the parishes in which they lie, and each, without any regard to the extent of his peculiar property, puts as much stock upon them as he chooses. The sheep are miserable-looking, hairy-legged creatures, of all colours, even to sky-blue. I often wondered where Jacob got speckled lambs; I think now they must have been of the Shetland stock. In our return, pass the upper end of the little lake of *Cleik-him-in*, which is divided by a rude causeway from another small loch, communicating with it, however, by a sluice, for the purpose of driving a mill. But such a mill! The wheel is horizontal, with the cogs turned diagonally to the water; the beam stands upright, and is inserted in a stone-quern of the old-fashioned construction. This simple machine is enclosed in a hovel about the size of a pig-stye—and there is the mill![1] There are about 500 such mills in Shetland, each incapable of grinding more than a sack at a time.

'I cannot get a distinct account of the nature of the land rights. The Udal proprietors have ceased to exist, yet proper feudal tenures seem ill understood. Districts of ground are in many instances understood to belong to Townships or Communities, possessing what may be arable by patches, and what is muir as a commonty, *pro indiviso*. But then individuals of such a Township often take it upon them to grant feus of particular parts of the property thus possessed *pro indiviso*. The town of Lerwick is built upon a part of the commonty of Sound, the proprietors of the houses having feu-rights from different heritors of that Township, but why from one rather than another, or how even the whole Township combining (which has not yet been attempted) could grant such a right upon principle, seems altogether uncertain. In the meantime the chief stress is laid upon occupance. I should have supposed, upon principle, that Lord Dundas, as superior, possessed the *dominium eminens*, and ought to be resorted to as the source of land rights. But it is not so. It has been found that the heritors of each Township hold directly of the Crown, only paying the *Scat*, or Norwegian land-tax, and other duties to his lordship, used and wont. Besides, he has what are called property lands in every Township, or in most, which he lets to his tenants. Lord Dundas is now trying to introduce the system of leases and a better kind of agriculture.[1] Return home and dine at Sinclair's, a decent inn—Captain M'Diarmid and other gentlemen dine with us.—Sleep at the inn on a straw couch.

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[1] Here occurs a rude scratch of drawing.

'*5th August* 1814.—Hazy disagreeable morning;—Erskine trying the rioters—notwithstanding which, a great deal of rioting still in the town. The Greenlanders, however, only quarrelled among themselves, and the Zetland sailors seemed to exert themselves in keeping peace. They are, like all the other Zetlanders I have seen, a strong, clear-complexioned, handsome race, and the women are very pretty. The females are rather slavishly employed, however, and I saw more than one carrying home the heavy sea-chests of their husbands, brothers, or lovers, discharged from on board the Greenlanders. The Zetlanders are, however, so far provident, that when they enter the navy they make liberal allowance of their pay for their wives and families. Not less than £15,000 a year has been lately paid by the Admiralty on this account; yet this influx of money, with that from the Greenland fishery, seems rather to give the means of procuring useless indulgences than of augmenting the stock of productive labour. Mr. Collector Ross tells me that from the King's books it appears that the quantity of spirits, tea, coffee, tobacco, snuff, and sugar imported annually into Lerwick for the consumption of Zetland averages at sale price £20,000 yearly at the least. Now the inhabitants of Zetland, men, women, and children, do not exceed 22,000 in all, and the proportion of foreign luxuries seems monstrous, unless we allow for the habits contracted by the seamen in their foreign trips. Tea, in particular, is used by all ranks, and porridge quite exploded.

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[1] Lord Dundas was created Earl of Zetland in 1838, and died in February 1839.

'We parade Lerwick. The most remarkable thing is, that the main street being flagged, and all the others very narrow lanes descending the hill by steps, anything like a cart, of the most ordinary and rude construction, seems not only out of question when the town was built, but in its present state quite excluded. A road of five miles in length, on the line between Lerwick and Scalloway, has been already made—upon a very awkward and expensive plan, and ill-lined as may be supposed. But it is proposed to extend this road by degrees: carts will then be introduced, and by crossing the breed of their ponies judiciously, they will have Galloways to draw them. The streets of Lerwick (as one blunder perpetrates another) will then be a bar to improvement, for till the present houses are greatly altered, no cart can approach the quay. In the garden of Captain Nicolson, R.N., which is rather in a flourishing state, he has tried various trees, almost all of which have died except the willow. But the plants seem to me to be injured in their passage; seeds would perhaps do better. We are visited by several of the notables of the island, particularly Mr. Mowat, a considerable proprietor, who claims acquaintance with me as the friend of my father, and remembers me as a boy. The day clearing up, Duff and I walk with this good old gentleman to *Cleik-him-in*, and with some trouble drag a boat off the beach into the fresh-water loch, and go to visit the Picts' castle. It is of considerable size, and consists of three circular walls, of huge natural stones admirably combined without cement. The outer circuit seems to have been simply a bounding wall or bulwark; the second or interior defence contains lodgements such as I shall describe. This inner circuit is surrounded by a wall of about sixteen or eighteen feet thick, composed, as I said, of huge massive stones placed in layers with great art, but without mortar or cement. The wall is not perpendicular, but the circle lessens gradually towards the top, as an old-fashioned pigeon-house. Up the interior of this wall there proceeds a circular winding gallery ascending in the form of an inclined plane, so as to gain the top by circling round like a cork-screw within the walls. This is enlightened by little apertures (about two feet by three) into the inside, and also, it is said, by small slits—of which I saw none. It is said there are marks of galleries within the circuit, running parallel to the horizon; these I saw no remains of; and the interior gallery, with its apertures, is so extremely low and narrow, being only about three feet square, that it is difficult to conceive how it could serve the purpose of communication. At any rate, the size fully justifies the tradition prevalent here as well as in the south of Scotland, that the Picts were a diminutive race. More of this when we see the more perfect specimen of a Pict castle in Mousa, which we resolve to examine, if it be possible. Certainly I am deeply curious to see what must be one of the most ancient houses in the world, built by a people who, while they seem to have bestowed much pains on their habitations, knew neither the art of cement, of arches, or of stairs. The situation is wild, dreary, and impressive. On the land side are huge sheets and fragments of rocks, interspersed with a stinted vegetation of grass and heath, which bears no proportion to the rocks and stones. From the top of his tower the Pictish Monarch might look out upon a stormy sea, washing a succession of rocky capes, reaches, and headlands, and immediately around him was the deep fresh-water loch on which his fortress was constructed. It communicates with the land by a sort of causeway, formed, like the artificial islet itself, by heaping together stones till the pile reached the surface of the water. This is usually passable, but at present overflooded.—Return and dine with Mr. Duncan, Sheriff-Substitute—are introduced to Dr. Edmonstone, author of a History of Shetland, who proposes to accompany us to-morrow to see the Cradle of Noss. I should have mentioned that Mr. Stevenson sailed this morning with the yacht to survey some isles to the northward; he returns on Saturday, it is hoped.

'*6th August.*—Hire a six-oared boat, whaler-built, with a taper point at each end, so that the rudder can be hooked on either at pleasure. These vessels look very frail, but are admirably adapted to the stormy seas, where they live when a ship's boat stiffly and compactly built must necessarily perish. They owe this to their elasticity and lightness. Some of the rowers wear a sort of coats of dressed sheep leather, sewed together with thongs. We sailed out at the southern inlet of the harbour, rounding successively the capes of the Hammer, Kirkubus, the Ving, and others, consisting of bold cliffs, hollowed into caverns, or divided into pillars and arches of fantastic appearance, by the constant action of the waves. As we passed the most northerly of these capes, called, I think, the Ord, and turned into the open sea, the scenes became yet more tremendously sublime. Rocks upwards of three or four hundred feet in height, presented themselves in gigantic succession, sinking perpendicularly into the main, which is very deep even within a few fathoms of their base. One of these capes is called the Bard-head; a huge projecting arch is named the Giant's Leg.

> Here the lone sea-bird wakes its wildest cry.[1]

Not lone, however, in one sense, for their numbers and the variety of their tribes are immense, though I think they do not quite equal those of Dunbuy, on the coast of Buchan. Standing across a little bay, we reached the Isle of Noss, having hitherto coasted the shore of Bressay. Here we see a detached and precipitous rock, or island, being a portion rent by a narrow sound from the rest of the cliff, and called the Holm. This detached rock is wholly inaccessible, unless by a pass of peril, entitled the Cradle of Noss, which is a sort of wooden chair, travelling from precipice to precipice on rings, which run upon two cables stretched across over the gulf. We viewed this extraordinary contrivance from beneath, at the distance of perhaps one hundred fathoms at least. The boatmen made light of the risk of crossing it, but it must be tremendous to a brain disposed to be giddy. Seen from beneath, a man in the basket would resemble a large crow or raven floating between rock and rock. The purpose of this strange contrivance is to give the tenant the benefit of putting a few sheep upon the Holm, the top of which is level, and affords good pasture. The animals are transported in the cradle by one at a time, a shepherd holding them upon his knees. The channel between the Holm and the isle is passable by boats in calm weather, but not at the time when we saw it. Rowing on through a heavy tide, and nearer the breakers than any but Zetlanders would have ventured, we rounded another immensely high cape, called by the islanders the Noup of Noss, but by sailors Hang-cliff, from its having a projecting appearance. This was the highest rock we had yet seen, though not quite perpendicular. Its height has never been measured: I should judge it exceeds 600 feet; it has been conjectured to measure 800 and upwards. Our steersman had often descended this precipitous rock, having only the occasional assistance of a rope, one end of which he secured from time to time round some projecting cliff. The collecting sea-fowl for their feathers was the object, and he might gain five or six dozen, worth eight or ten shillings, by such an adventure. These huge precipices abound with caverns, many of which run much farther into the rock than any one has ventured to explore. We entered (with much hazard to our boat) one called the Orkney-man's Harbour, because an Orkney vessel run in there some years since to escape a French privateer. The entrance was lofty enough to admit us without striking the mast, but a sudden turn in the direction of the cave would have consigned us to utter darkness if we had gone in farther. The dropping of the sea-fowl and cormorants into the water from the sides of the cavern, when disturbed by our approach, had something in it wild and terrible.

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[1] Campbell—*Pleasures of Hope.*

'After passing the Noup, the precipices become lower, and sink into a rocky shore with deep indentations, called by the natives *Gios*. Here we would fain have landed to visit the Cradle from the top of the cliff, but the surf rendered it impossible. We therefore rowed on like Thalaba in "Allah's name," around the Isle of Noss, and landed upon the opposite side of the small sound which divides it from Bressay. Noss exactly resembles in shape Salisbury crags, supposing the sea to flow down the valley called the Hunter's bog, and round the foot of the precipice. The eastern part of the isle is fine smooth pasture, the best I have seen in these isles, sloping upwards to the verge of the tremendous rocks which form its western front.

'As we are to dine at Gardie-House (the seat of young Mr. Mowat), on the Isle of Bressay, Duff and I—who went together on this occasion—resolve to walk across the island, about three miles, being by this time thoroughly wet. Bressay is a black and heathy isle, full of little lochs and bogs. Through storm and shade, and dense and dry, we find our way to Gardie, and have then to encounter the sublunary difficulties of wanting the keys of our portmanteaus, etc., the servants having absconded to see the Cradle. These being overcome, we are most hospitably treated at Gardie. Young Mr. Mowat, son of my old friend, is an improver, and a *moderate* one. He has got a ploughman from Scotland, who acts as *grieve*, but as yet with the prejudices and inconveniences which usually attach themselves to the most salutary experiments. The ploughman complains that the Zetlanders work as if a spade or hoe burned their fingers, and that though they only got a shilling a day, yet the labour of three of them does not exceed what one good hand in Berwickshire would do for 2s. 6d. The islanders retort, that a man can do no more than he can; that they are not used to be taxed to their work so severely; that they will work as their fathers did, and not otherwise; and at first the landlord found difficulty in getting hands to work under his Caledonian taskmaster. Besides, they find fault with his *ho*, and *gee*, and *wo*, when ploughing. "He speaks to the horse," they say, "and they gang—and there's something no canny about the man." In short, between the prejudices of laziness and superstition, the ploughman leads a sorry life of it; yet these prejudices are daily abating, under the steady and indulgent management of the proprietor. Indeed, nowhere is improvement in agriculture more necessary. An old-fashioned Zetland plough is a real curiosity. It had but one handle, or stilt, and a coulter, but no sock; it ripped the furrow, therefore, but did not throw it aside. When this precious machine was in motion, it was dragged by four little bullocks yoked abreast, and as many ponies harnessed, or rather strung, to the plough by ropes and thongs of raw hide. One man went before walking backward, with his face to the bullocks, and pulling them forward by main strength. Another held down the plough by its single handle, and made a sort of slit in the earth, which two women, who closed the procession, converted into a furrow, by throwing the earth aside with shovels. An antiquary might be of opinion that this was the very model of the original plough invented by Triptolemus; and it is but justice to Zetland to say that these relics of ancient agricultural art will soon have all the interest attached to rarity. We could only hear of one of these ploughs within three miles of Lerwick.

'This and many other barbarous habits to which the Zetlanders were formerly wedded, seem only to have subsisted because their amphibious character of fishers and farmers induced them to neglect agricultural arts. A

Zetland farmer looks to the sea to pay his rent; if the land finds him a little meal and kail, and (if he be a very clever fellow) a few potatoes, it is very well. The more intelligent part of the landholders are sensible of all this, but argue like men of good sense and humanity on the subject. To have good farming, you must have a considerable farm, upon which capital may be laid out to advantage. But to introduce this change suddenly would turn adrift perhaps twenty families, who now occupy small farms *pro indiviso*, cultivating by patches, or *rundale* and *runrig*, what part of the property is arable, and stocking the pasture as a common upon which each family turns out such stock as they can rear, without observing any proportion as to the number which it can support. In this way many townships, as they are called, subsist indeed, but in a precarious and indigent manner. Fishing villages seem the natural resource for this excess of population; but, besides the expense of erecting them, the habits of the people are to be considered, who, with "one foot on land and one on sea," would be with equal reluctance confined to either element. The remedy seems to be, that the larger proprietors should gradually set the example of better cultivation, and introduce better implements. They will, by degrees, be imitated by the inferior proprietors, and by their tenants; and, as turnips and hay crops become more general, a better and heavier class of stock will naturally be introduced.

'The sheep in particular might be improved into a valuable stock, and would no doubt thrive, since the winters are very temperate. But I should be sorry that extensive pasture farms were introduced, as it would tend to diminish a population invaluable for the supply of our navy. The improvement of the arable land, on the contrary, would soon set them beyond the terrors of famine with which the islanders are at present occasionally visited; and, combined with fisheries, carried on not by farmers but by real fishers, would amply supply the inhabitants, without diminishing the export of dried fish. This separation of trades will in time take place, and then the prosperous days of Zetland will begin. The proprietors are already upon the alert, studying the means of gradual improvement, and no humane person would wish them to drive it on too rapidly, to the distress and perhaps destruction of the numerous tenants who have been bred under a different system.

'I have gleaned something of the peculiar superstitions of the Zetlanders, which are numerous and potent. Witches, fairies, etc., are as numerous as ever they were in Teviotdale. The latter are called *Trows*, probably from the Norwegian *Dwärg* (or *dwarf*) the D being readily converted into T. The dwarfs are the prime agents in the machinery of Norwegian superstition. The *trows* do not differ from the fairies of the Lowlands, or *Sighean* of the Highlanders. They steal children, dwell within the interior of green hills, and often carry mortals into their recesses. Some, yet alive, pretend to have been carried off in this way, and obtain credit for the marvels they tell of the subterranean habitations of the trows. Sometimes, when a person becomes melancholy and low-spirited, the trows are supposed to have stolen the real being, and left a moving phantom to represent him. Sometimes they are said to steal only the heart—like Lancashire witches. There are cures in each case. The party's friends resort to a cunning man or woman, who hangs about the neck a triangular stone in the shape of a heart, or conjures back the lost individual, by retiring to the hills and employing the necessary spells. A common receipt, when a child appears consumptive and puny, is, that the conjurer places a bowl of water on the patient's head, and pours melted lead into it through the wards of a key. The metal assumes of course a variety of shapes, from which he selects a portion, after due consideration, which is sewn into the shirt of the patient. Sometimes no part of the lead suits the seer's fancy. Then the operation is recommenced, until he obtains a fragment of such a configuration as suits his mystical purpose. Mr. Duncan told us he had been treated in this way when a boy.

'A worse and most horrid opinion prevails, or did prevail, among the fishers—namely, that he who saves a drowning man will receive at his hands some deep wrong or injury. Several instances were quoted to-day in company, in which the utmost violence had been found necessary to compel the fishers to violate this inhuman prejudice. It is conjectured to have arisen as an apology for rendering no assistance to the mariners as they escaped from a shipwrecked vessel, for these isles are infamous for plundering wrecks. A story is told of the crew of a stranded vessel who were warping themselves ashore by means of a hawser which they had fixed to the land. The islanders (of Unst, as I believe) watched their motions in silence, till an old man reminded them that if they suffered these sailors to come ashore, they would consume all their winter stock of provisions. A Zetlander cut the hawser, and the poor wretches, twenty in number, were all swept away. This is a tale of former times—the cruelty would not now be *active;* but I fear that even yet the drowning mariner would in some places receive no assistance in his exertions, and certainly he would in most be plundered to the skin upon his landing. The gentlemen do their utmost to prevent this infamous practice. It may seem strange that the natives should be so little affected by a distress to which they are themselves so constantly exposed. But habitual exposure to danger hardens the heart against its consequences, whether to ourselves or others. There is yet living a man—if he can be called so—to whom the following story belongs:—He was engaged in catching sea-fowl upon one of the cliffs, with his father and brother. All three were suspended by a cord, according to custom, and overhanging the ocean at the height of some hundred feet. This man being uppermost on the cord, observed that it was giving way, as unable to support their united weight. He called out to his brother who was next to him—"Cut away a nail below, Willie," meaning he should cut the rope beneath, and let his father drop. Willie refused, and bid him cut himself, if he pleased. He did so, and his brother and father were precipitated into the sea. He never thought of concealing or denying the adventure in all its parts. We left Gardie House late; being on the side of the Isle of Bressay, opposite to Lerwick, we were soon rowed across the bay. A laugh with Hamilton,[1] whose gout keeps him stationary at Lerwick, but whose good-humour defies gout and every other provocation, concludes the evening.

'*7th August* 1814.—Being Sunday, Duff, Erskine, and I rode to Tingwall upon Zetland ponies, to breakfast with our friend Parson Turnbull, who had come over in our yacht. An ill-conducted and worse-made road served us four miles on our journey. This *Via Flaminia* of Thule terminates, like its prototype, in a bog. It is, however, the only road in these isles, except about half a mile made by Mr. Turnbull. The land in the interior much resembles the Peel-heights, near Ashestiel; but, as you approach the other side of the island, becomes better. Tingwall is rather a fertile valley, up which winds a loch of about two miles in length. The kirk and manse stand at the head of the loch, and command a view down the valley to another lake beyond the first, and thence over another reach of land, to the ocean, indented by capes and studded with isles; among which, that of St. Ninian's, abruptly divided from the mainland by a deep chasm, is the most conspicuous. Mr. Turnbull is a Jedburgh man by birth, but a Zetlander by settlement and inclination. I have reason to be proud of my countryman;—he is doing his best, with great patience and judgment, to set a good example both in temporals and spirituals, and is generally beloved and respected among all classes. His glebe is in far the best order of any ground I have seen in Zetland. It is enclosed chiefly with dry-stone, instead of the useless turf-dykes; and he has sown grass, and has a hay-stack, and a second crop of clover, and may claim well-dressed fields of potatoes, barley, and oats. The people around him are obviously affected by his example. He gave us an excellent discourse and remarkably good prayers, which are seldom the excellence of the Presbyterian worship.[1] The congregation were numerous, decent, clean, and well-dressed. The men have all the air of seamen, and are a good-looking hardy race. Some of the old fellows had got faces much resembling Tritons; if they had had conchs to blow, it would have completed them. After church, ride down the loch to Scalloway—the country wild but pleasant, with sloping hills of good pasturage, and patches of cultivation on the lower ground. Pass a huge standing stone or pillar. Here, it is said, the son of an old Earl of the Orkneys met his fate. He had rebelled against his father, and fortified himself in Zetland. The Earl sent a party to dislodge him, who, not caring to proceed to violence against his person, failed in the attempt. The Earl then sent a stronger force, with orders to take him dead or alive. The young Absalom's castle was stormed—he himself fled across the loch, and was overtaken and slain at this pillar. The Earl afterwards executed the perpetrators of this slaughter, though they had only fulfilled his own mandate.

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[1] Robert Hamilton, Sheriff of Lanarkshire, and afterwards one of the Clerks of Session, was a particular favourite of Scott—first, among many other good reasons, because he had been a soldier in his youth, had fought gallantly and been wounded severely in the American war, and was a very Uncle Toby in military enthusiasm; 2ndly, because he was a brother antiquary of the genuine Monkbarns breed; 3rdly (last not least), because he was, in spite of the example of the head of his name and race, a steady Tory. Mr. Hamilton sent for Scott when upon his deathbed in 1831, and desired him to choose and carry off as a parting memorial any article he liked in his collection of arms. Sir Walter (by that time sorely shattered in his own health) selected the sword with which his good friend had been begirt at Bunker's Hill.

'We reach Scalloway, and visit the ruins of an old castle, composed of a double tower or keep, with turrets at the corners. It is the principal if not the only ruin of Gothic times in Zetland, and is of very recent date, being built in 1600. It was built by Patrick Stewart, Earl of Orkney, afterwards deservedly executed at Edinburgh for many acts of tyranny and oppression. It was this rapacious Lord who imposed many of those heavy duties still levied from the Zetlanders by Lord Dundas. The exactions by which he accomplished this erection were represented as grievous. He was so dreaded, that upon his trial one Zetland witness refused to say a word till he was assured that there was no chance of the Earl returning to Scalloway. Over the entrance of the castle are his arms, much defaced, with the unicorns of Scotland for supporters, the assumption of which was one of the articles of indictment. There is a Scriptural inscription also above the door, in Latin, now much defaced—

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[1] During the winter of 1837–8 this worthy clergyman's wife, his daughter, and a servant perished within sight of the manse, from a flaw in the ice on the loch—which they were crossing as the nearest way home.—[1839.]

PATRICIUS ORCHADIÆ ET ZETLANDIÆ COMES. A. D. 1600.
CUJUS FUNDAMEN SAXUM EST, DOMUS ILLA MANEBIT
STABILIS : E CONTRA, SI SIT ARENA, PERIT.

'This is said to have been furnished to Earl Patrick by a Presbyterian divine, who slily couched under it an allusion to the evil practices by which the Earl had established his power. He perhaps trusted that the language might disguise the import from the Earl.[1] If so, the Scottish nobility are improved in literature, for the Duke of Gordon pointed out an error in the Latinity.

'Scalloway has a beautiful and very safe harbour, but as it is somewhat difficult of access, from a complication of small islands, it is inferior to Lerwick. Hence, though still nominally the capital of Zetland, for all edictal citations are made at Scalloway, it has sunk into a small fishing hamlet. The Norwegians made their original settlement in this parish of Tingwall. At the head of this loch, and just below the manse, is a small round islet accessible by stepping-stones, where they held their courts; hence the islet is called Law-ting — Ting, or Thing, answering to our word business, exactly like the Latin *negotium*. It seems odd that in Dumfriesshire, and even in the Isle of Man, where the race and laws were surely Celtic, we have this Gothic word Ting and Tingwald applied in the same way. We dined with Mr. Scott of Scalloway, who, like several families of this name in Shetland, is derived from the house of Scotstarvet. They are very clannish, marry much among themselves, and are proud of their descent. Two young ladies, daughters of Mr. Scott's, dined with us—they were both Mrs. Scotts, having married brothers—the husband of one was lost in the unfortunate Doris. They were pleasant, intelligent women, and exceedingly obliging. Old Mr. Scott seems a good country gentleman. He is negotiating an exchange with Lord Dundas, which will give him the Castle of Scalloway and two or three neighbouring islands: the rest of the archipelago (seven, I think, in number) are already his own. He will thus have command of the whole fishing and harbour, for which he parts with an estate of more immediate value, lying on the other side of the mainland. I found my name made me very popular in this family, and there were many enquiries after the state of the Buccleuch family, in which they seemed to take much interest. I found them possessed of the remarkable circumstances attending the late projected sale of Ancrum, and the death of Sir John Scott, and thought it strange that, settled for three generations in a country so distant, they should still take an interest in those matters. I was loaded with shells and little curiosities for my young people.

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[1] In his reviewal of Pitcairn's Trials (1831), Scott says—'In erecting this Earl's Castle of Scalloway, and other expensive edifices, the King's tenants were forced to work in quarries, transport stone, dig, delve, climb, and build, and submit to all possible sorts of servile and painful labour, without either meat, drink, hire, or recompense of any kind. "My father," said Earl Patrick, "built his house at Sumburgh on the sand, and it has given way already ; this of mine on the rock shall abide and endure." He did not or would not understand that the oppression, rapacity and cruelty by means of which the house arose, were what the clergyman really pointed to in his recommendation of a motto. Accordingly, the huge tower remains wild and desolate—its chambers filled with sand, and its rifted walls and dismantled battlements giving unrestrained access to the roaring sea blast.' —For more of Earl Patrick, see Scott's Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. xxi. pp. 230, 233 ; vol. xxiii. pp. 327, 329.

'There was a report (January was two years) of a kraken or some monstrous fish being seen off Scalloway.

The object was visible for a fortnight, but nobody dared approach it, although I should have thought the Zetlanders would not have feared the devil if he came by water. They pretended that the suction, when they came within a certain distance, was so great as to endanger their boats. The object was described as resembling a vessel with her keel turned upmost in the sea, or a small ridge of rock or island. Mr. Scott thinks it might have been a vessel overset, or a large whale: if the latter, it seems odd they should not have known it, as whales are the intimate acquaintances of all Zetland sailors. Whatever it was, it disappeared after a heavy gale of wind, which seems to favour the idea that it was the wreck of a vessel. Mr. Scott seems to think Pontopiddan's narrations and descriptions are much more accurate than we inland men suppose; and I find most Zetlanders of the same opinion. Mr. Turnbull, who is not credulous upon these subjects, tells me that this year a parishioner of his, a well-informed and veracious person, saw an animal, which, if his description was correct, must have been of the species of sea-snake, driven ashore on one of the Orkneys two or three years ago. It was very long, and seemed about the thickness of a Norway log, and swam on the top of the waves, occasionally lifting and bending its head. Mr. T. says he has no doubt of the veracity of the narrator, but still thinks it possible it may have been a mere log or beam of wood, and that the spectator may have been deceived by the motion of the waves, joined to the force of imagination. This for the Duke of Buccleuch.

'At Scalloway my curiosity was gratified by an account of the sword-dance, now almost lost, but still practised in the Island of Papa, belonging to Mr. Scott. There are eight performers, seven of whom represent the Seven Champions of Christendom, who enter one by one with their swords drawn, and are presented to the eighth personage, who is not named. Some rude couplets are spoken (in *English*, not *Norse*), containing a sort of panegyric upon each champion as he is presented. They then dance a sort of cotillion, as the ladies described it, going through a number of evolutions with their swords. One of my three Mrs. Scotts readily promised to procure me the lines, the rhymes, and the form of the dance. I regret much that young Mr. Scott was absent during this visit; he is described as a reader and an enthusiast in poetry. Probably I might have interested him in preserving the dance, by causing young persons to learn it. A few years since, a party of Papa-men came to dance the sword-dance at Lerwick as a public exhibition with great applause. The warlike dances of the northern people, of which I conceive this to be the only remnant in the British dominions,[1] are repeatedly alluded to by their poets and historians. The introduction of the Seven Champions savours of a later period, and was probably ingrafted upon the dance when *mysteries* and *moralities* (the first scenic representations) came into fashion. In a stall pamphlet, called the history of Buckshaven, it is said those fishers sprung from Danes, and brought with them their *war-dance* or *sword-dance*, and a rude wooden cut of it is given. We resist the hospitality of our entertainers, and return to Lerwick despite a most downright fall of rain. My pony stumbles coming down hill; saddle sways round, having but one girth and that too long, and lays me on my back. *N.B.* The bogs in Zetland as soft as those in Liddisdale. Get to Lerwick about ten at night. No yacht has appeared.

'*8th August.*—No yacht, and a rainy morning; bring up my journal. Day clears up, and we go to pay our farewell visits of thanks to the hospitable Lerwegians, and at the Fort. Visit kind old Mr. Mowat, and walk with him and Collector Ross to the point of Quaggers, or Twaggers, which forms one arm of the southern entrance to the sound of Bressay. From the eminence a delightful sea view, with several of those narrow capes and deep reaches or inlets of the sea, which indent the shores of that land. On the right hand a narrow bay, bounded by the isthmus of Sound, with a house upon it resembling an old castle. In the indenture of the bay, and divided from the sea by a slight causeway, the lake of *Cleik-him-in*, with its Pictish castle. Beyond this the bay opens another yet; and, behind all, a succession of capes, headlands, and islands, as far as the cape called Sumburgh-head, which is the furthest point of Zetland in that direction. Inland, craggy, and sable muirs, with cairns, among which we distinguish the Wart or Ward of Wick, to which we walked on the 4th. On the left the island of Bressay, with its peaked hill called the Wart of Bressay. Over Bressay see the top of Hang-cliff. Admire the Bay of Lerwick, with its shipping, widening out to the northwards, and then again contracted into a narrow sound, through which the infamous Bothwell was pursued by Kirkaldy of Grange, until he escaped through the dexterity of his pilot, who sailed close along a sunken rock, upon which Kirkaldy, keeping the weather-gauge, struck, and sustained damage. The rock is visible at low water, and is still called the Unicorn, from the name of Kirkaldy's vessel. Admire Mr. Mowat's little farm, of about thirty acres, bought about twenty years since for £75, and redeemed from the miserable state of the surrounding country, so that it now bears excellent corn; here also was a hay crop. With Mr. Turnbull's it makes two. Visit Mr. Ross, collector of the customs, who presents me with the most superb collection of the stone axes (or adzes, or whatever they are), called *celts*. The Zetlanders call them *thunderbolts*, and keep them in their houses as a receipt against thunder; but the Collector has succeeded in obtaining several. We are now to dress for dinner with the Notables of Lerwick, who give us an entertainment in their Town-Hall. Oho!

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[1] Mr. W. S. Rose informs me that when he was at school at Winchester, the morris-dancers there used to exhibit a sword-dance resembling that described at Camacho's wedding in Don Quixote; and Mr. Morritt adds, that similar dances are even yet performed in the villages about Rokeby every Christmas.

'Just as we were going to dinner, the yacht appeared, and Mr. Stevenson landed. He gives a most favourable account of the isles to the northward, particularly Unst. I believe Lerwick is the worst part of Shetland. Are hospitably received and entertained by the Lerwick gentlemen. They are a quick intelligent race—chiefly of Scottish birth, as appears from their names Mowat, Gifford, Scott, and so forth. These are the chief proprietors. The Norwegian or Danish surnames, though of course the more ancient, belong, with some exceptions, to the lower ranks. The Veteran Corps expects to be disbanded, and the officers and Lerwegians seem to part with regret. Some of the officers talk of settling here. The price of everything is moderate, and the style of living unexpensive. Against these conveniences are to be placed a total separation from public life, news, and literature; and a variable and inhospitable climate. Lerwick will suffer most severely if the Fort is not occupied by some force or other; for, between whisky and frolic, the Greenland sailors will certainly burn the little town. We have seen a good deal, and heard much more, of the pranks of these unruly guests. A gentleman of Lerwick, who had company to dine with him, observed beneath his window a party of sailors eating a leg of roast mutton, which he witnessed with philanthropic satisfaction, till he received the melancholy information, that that individual leg of mutton, being the very sheet-anchor of his own entertainment, had been violently carried off from his kitchen, spit and all, by these honest gentlemen, who were now devouring it. Two others having carried off a sheep, were apprehended, and brought before a Justice of the Peace, who questioned them respecting the fact. The first denied he had taken the sheep, but said he had seen it taken away by a fellow with a red nose and a black wig—(this was the Justice's description)—"Don't you think he was like his honour, Tom?" he added, appealing to his comrade. "By G—, Jack," answered Tom, "I believe it was the very man!" Erskine has been busy with these facetious gentlemen, and has sent several to prison, but nothing could have been done without the soldiery. We leave Lerwick at eight o'clock, and sleep on board the yacht.

'*9th August* 1814.—Waked at seven, and find the vessel has left Lerwick harbour, and is on the point of entering the sound which divides the small island of Mousa (or Queen's island) from Coningsburgh, a very wild part of the main island so called. Went ashore, and see the very ancient castle of Mousa, which stands close on the sea-shore. It is a Pictish fortress, the most entire probably in the world. In form it resembles a dice-box, for the truncated cone is continued only to a certain height, after which it begins to rise perpendicularly, or rather with a tendency to expand outwards. The building is round, and has been surrounded with an outer-wall, of which hardly the slightest vestiges now remain. It is composed of a layer of stones, without cement; they are not of large size, but rather small and thin. To give a vulgar comparison, it resembles an old ruinous pigeon-house. Mr. Stevenson took the dimensions of this curious fort, which are as follows:—Outside diameter at the base is fifty-two feet; at the top thirty-eight feet. The diameter of the interior at the base is nineteen feet six inches; at the top twenty-one feet; the curve in the inside being the reverse of the outside, or nearly so. The thickness of the walls at the base seventeen feet; at the top eight feet six inches. The height outside forty-two feet; the inside thirty-four feet. The door or entrance faces the sea, and the interior is partly filled with rubbish. When you enter you see, in the inner wall, a succession of small openings like windows, directly one above another, with broad flat stones, serving for lintels; these are about nine inches thick. The whole resembles a ladder. There were four of these perpendicular rows of windows or apertures, the situation of which corresponds with the cardinal points of the compass. You enter the galleries contained in the thickness of the wall by two of these apertures, which have been broken down. These interior spaces are of two descriptions: one consists of a winding ascent, not quite an inclined plane, yet not by any means a regular stair; but the edges of the stones, being suffered to project irregularly, serve for rude steps—or a kind of assistance. Through this narrow staircase, which winds round the building, you creep up to the top of the castle, which is partly ruinous. But besides the staircase, there branch off at irregular intervals horizontal galleries, which go round the whole building, and receive air from the holes I formerly mentioned. These apertures vary in size, diminishing as they run, from about thirty inches in width by eighteen in height, till they are only about a foot square. The lower galleries are full man height, but narrow. They diminish both in height and width as they ascend, and as the thickness of the wall in which they are enclosed diminishes. The uppermost gallery is so narrow and low, that it was with great difficulty I crept through it. The walls are built very irregularly, the sweep of the cone being different on the different sides.

'It is said by Torfæus that this fort was repaired and strengthened by Erlind, who, having forcibly carried off the mother of Harold Earl of the Orkneys, resolved to defend himself to extremity in this place against the insulted Earl. How a castle could be defended which had no opening to the outside for shooting arrows, and which was of a capacity to be pulled to pieces by the assailants, who could advance without annoyance to the bottom of the wall (unless it were battlemented upon the top), does not easily appear. But to Erlind's operations the castle of Mousa possibly owes the upper and perpendicular, or rather overhanging, part of its elevation, and also its rude staircase. In these two particulars it seems to differ from all other Picts' castles, which are ascended by an inclined plane, and generally, I believe, terminate in a truncated cone, without that strange counterpart of the perpendicular or projecting part of the upper wall. Opposite to the castle of Mousa are the ruins of another Pictish fort: indeed, they all communicate with each other through the isles. The island of Mousa is the property of a Mr. Piper, who has improved it considerably, and values his castle. I advised him to clear out the interior, as he tells us there are three or four galleries beneath those now accessible, and the difference of height between the exterior and interior warrants his assertion.

'We get on board, and in time, for the wind freshens, and becomes contrary. We beat down to Sumburgh-head, through rough weather. This is the extreme south-eastern point of Zetland; and as the Atlantic and German oceans unite at this point, a frightful tide runs here, called Sumburgh-rost. The breeze, contending with the tide, flings the breakers in great style upon the high broken cliffs of Sumburgh-head. They are all one white foam, ascending to a great height. We wished to double this point, and lie by in a bay between that and the northern or north-western cape, called Fitful-head, and which seems higher than Sumburgh itself—and tacked repeatedly with this view; but a confounded islet, called *The Horse*, always baffled us, and, after three heats, fairly distanced us. So we run into a roadstead, called Quendal bay, on the south-eastern side, and there anchor for the night. We go ashore with various purposes—Stevenson to see the site of a proposed lighthouse on this tremendous cape—Marjoribanks to shoot rabbits—and Duff and I to look about us.

'I ascended the head by myself, which is lofty, and commands a wild sea-view. Zetland stretches away, with all its projecting capes and inlets, to the north-eastward. Many of those inlets approach each other very nearly; indeed, the two opposite bays at Sumburgh-head seem on the point of joining, and rendering that cape an island. The two creeks from those east and western seas are only divided by a low isthmus of blowing sand, and similar to that which wastes part of the east coast of Scotland. It has here blown like the deserts of Arabia, and destroyed some houses, formerly the occasional residences of the Earls of Orkney. The steep and rocky side of the cape, which faces the west, does not seem much more durable. These lofty cliffs are all of sand-flag, a very loose and perishable kind of rock, which slides down in immense masses, like avalanches, after every storm. The rest lies so loose, that, on the very brow of the loftiest crag, I had no difficulty in sending down a fragment as large as myself: he thundered down in tremendous style, but splitting upon a projecting cliff, descended into the ocean like a shower of shrapnel shot. The sea beneath rages incessantly among a thousand of the fragments which have fallen from the peaks, and which assume an hundred strange shapes. It would have been a fine situation to compose an ode to the Genius of Sumburgh-head, or an Elegy upon a Cormorant—or to have written and spoken madness of any kind in prose or poetry. But I gave vent to my excited feelings in a more simple way; and sitting gently down on the steep green slope which led to the beach, I e'en slid down a few hundred feet, and found the exercise quite an adequate vent to my enthusiasm. I recommend this exercise (time and place suiting) to all my brother scribblers, and I have no doubt it will save much effusion of Christian ink. Those slopes are covered with beautiful short herbage. At the foot of the ascent, and towards the isthmus, is the old house of Sumburgh, in appearance a most dreary mansion. I found, on my arrival at the beach, that the hospitality of the inhabitants had entrapped my companions. I walked back to meet them, but escaped the gin and water. On board about nine o'clock at night. A little schooner lies between us and the shore, which we had seen all day buffeting the tide and breeze like ourselves. The wind increases, and the ship is made SNUG—a sure sign the passengers will not be so.

'10*th August* 1814.—The omen was but too true—a terrible combustion on board, among plates, dishes, glasses, writing-desks, etc. etc.; not a wink of sleep. We weigh and stand out into that delightful current called *Sumburgh-rost* or *rust.* This tide certainly owes us a grudge, for it drove us to the eastward about thirty miles on the night of the first, and occasioned our missing the Fair Isle, and now it has caught us on our return. All the landsmen sicker than sick, and our Viceroy, Stevenson, qualmish. This is the only time that I have felt more than temporary inconvenience, but this morning I have headache and nausea; these are trifles, and in a well-found vessel, with a good pilot, we have none of that mixture of danger which gives dignity to the traveller. But he must have a stouter heart than mine who can contemplate without horror the situation of a vessel of an inferior description caught among these headlands and reefs of rocks, in the long and dark winter nights of these regions. Accordingly, wrecks are frequent. It is proposed to have a light on Sumburgh-head, which is the first land made by vessels coming from the eastward; Fitful-head is higher, but is to the west, from which quarter few vessels come.

'We are now clear of Zetland, and about ten o'clock reach the Fair Isle;[1] one of their boats comes off, a strange-looking thing without an entire plank in it, excepting one on each side, upon the strength of which the whole depends, the rest being patched and joined. This trumpery skiff the men manage with the most astonishing dexterity, and row with remarkable speed; they have two banks, that is, two rowers on each bench, and use very short paddles. The wildness of their appearance, with long elf-locks, striped worsted caps, and shoes of raw hide—the fragility of their boat—and their extreme curiosity about us and our cutter, give them a title to be distinguished as *natives*. One of our people told their steersman, by way of jeer, that he must have great confidence in Providence to go to sea in such a vehicle; the man very sensibly replied, that without the same confidence he would not go to sea in the best *tool* in England. We take to our boat, and row for about three miles round the coast, in order to land at the inhabited part of the island. This coast abounds with grand views of rocks and bays. One immense portion of rock is (like the Holm of Noss) separated by a chasm from the mainland. As it is covered with herbage on the top, though a literal precipice all round, the natives contrive to ascend the rock by a place which would make a goat dizzy, and then drag the sheep up by ropes, though they sometimes carry a sheep up on their shoulders. The captain of a sloop of war, being ashore while they were at this work, turned giddy and sick while looking at them. This immense precipice is several hundred feet high, and is perforated below by some extraordinary apertures, through which a boat might pass; the light shines distinctly through these hideous chasms.

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[1] This is a solitary island, lying about half-way between Orkney and Zetland.

'After passing a square bay called the Northaven, tenanted by sea-fowl and seals (the first we have yet seen), we come in view of the small harbour. Land, and breakfast, for which, till now, none of us felt inclination. In front of the little harbour is the house of the tacksman, Mr. Strong, and in view are three small assemblages of miserable huts, where the inhabitants of the isle live. There are about thirty families and 250 inhabitants upon the *Fair Isle*. It merits its name, as the plain upon which the hamlets are situated, bears excellent barley, oats, and potatoes, and the rest of the isle is beautiful pasture, excepting to the eastward, where there is a moss, equally essential to the comfort of the inhabitants, since it supplies them with peats for fuel. The Fair Isle is about three miles long and a mile and a half broad. Mr. Strong received us very courteously. He lives here, like Robinson Crusoe, in absolute solitude as to society, unless by a chance visit from the officers of a man-of-war. There is a signal-post maintained on the island by Government, under this gentleman's inspection; when any ship appears that cannot answer his signals, he sends off to Lerwick and Kirkwall to give the alarm. Rogers[1] was off here last year, and nearly cut off one of Mr. Strong's express-boats, but the active islanders outstripped his people by speed of rowing. The inhabitants pay Mr. Strong for the possessions which they occupy under him as sub-tenants, and cultivate the isle in their own way, *i.e.* by digging instead of ploughing (though the ground is quite open and free from rocks, and they have several scores of ponies), and by raising alternate crops of barley, oats, and potatoes; the first and last are admirably good. They rather over-manure their crops; the possessions lie runrig, that is, by alternate ridges, and the outfield or pasture ground is possessed as common to all their cows and

[1] An American Commodore.

ponies. The islanders fish for Mr. Strong at certain fixed rates, and the fish is his property, which he sends to Kirkwall, Lerwick, or elsewhere, in a little schooner, the same which we left in Quendal bay, and about the arrival of which we found them anxious. An equal space of rich land on the Fair Isle, situated in an inland county of Scotland, would rent for £3000 a year at the very least. To be sure it would not be burdened with the population of 250 souls, whose bodies (fertile as it is) it cannot maintain in bread, they being supplied chiefly from the mainland. Fish they have plenty, and are even nice in their choice. Skate they will not touch; dog-fish they say is only food for Orkney-men, and when they catch them, they make a point of tormenting the poor fish for eating off their baits from the hook, stealing the haddocks from their lines, and other enormities. These people, being about half-way between Shetland and Orkney, have unfrequent connexion with either archipelago, and live and marry entirely among themselves. One lad told me, only five persons had left the island since his remembrance, and of those, three were pressed for the navy. They seldom go to Greenland; but this year five or six of their young men were on board the whalers. They seemed extremely solicitous about their return, and repeatedly questioned us about the names of the whalers which were at Lerwick, a point on which we could give little information.

'The manners of these islanders seem primitive and simple, and they are sober, good-humoured, and friendly —but *jimp* honest. Their comforts are, of course, much dependent on *their master's* pleasure; for so they call Mr. Strong. But they gave him the highest character for kindness and liberality, and prayed to God he might long be their ruler. After mounting the signal-post hill, or Malcolm's Head, which is faced by a most tremendous cliff, we separated on our different routes. The Sheriff went to rectify the only enormity on the island, which existed in the person of a drunken schoolmaster; Marchie[1] went to shoot sea-fowl, or rather to frighten them, as his calumniators allege. Stevenson and Duff went to inspect the remains or vestiges of a Danish lighthouse upon a distant hill, called, as usual, the Ward, or Ward-hill, and returned with specimens of copper ore. Hamilton went down to cater fish for our dinner, and see it properly cooked—and I to see two remarkable indentures in the coast called *Rivas*, perhaps from their being rifted or *riven*. They are exactly like the Buller of Buchan, the sea rolling into a large open basin within the land through a natural archway. These places are close to each other —one is oblong, and it is easy to descend into it by a rude path ; the other gulf is inaccessible from the land, unless to a *crags-man*, as these venturous climbers call themselves. I sat for about an hour upon the verge, like the cormorants around me, hanging my legs over the precipice ; but I could not get free of two or three well-meaning islanders, who held me fast by the skirts all the time—for it must be conceived, that our numbers and appointments had drawn out the whole population to admire and attend us. After we separated, each, like the nucleus of a comet, had his own distinct train of attendants.—Visit the capital town, a wretched assemblage of the basest huts, dirty without, and still dirtier within ; pigs, fowls, cows, men, women, and children, all living promiscuously under the same roof, and in the same room—the brood-sow making (among the more opulent) a distinguished inhabitant of the mansion. The compost, a liquid mass of utter abomination, is kept in a square pond of seven feet deep ; when I censured it, they allowed it might be dangerous to the *bairns ;* but appeared unconscious of any other objection. I cannot wonder they want meal, for assuredly they waste it. A great *bowie* or wooden vessel of porridge is made in the morning ; a child comes and sups a few spoonfuls ; then Mrs. Sow takes her share ; then the rest of the children or the parents, and all at pleasure ; then come the poultry when the mess is more cool ; the rest is flung upon the dunghill —and the goodwife wonders and complains when she wants meal in winter. They are a long-lived race, notwithstanding utter and inconceivable dirt and sluttery. A man of sixty told me his father died only last year, aged ninety-eight; nor was this considered as very unusual.

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[1] Mr. Marjoribanks.

'The clergyman of Dunrossness, in Zetland, visits these poor people once a year, for a week or two during summer. In winter this is impossible, and even the summer visit is occasionally interrupted for two years. Marriages and baptisms are performed, as one of the Isles-men told me, *by the slump*, and one of the children was old enough to tell the clergyman who sprinkled him with water, "Deil be in your fingers." Last time, four couple were married; sixteen children baptized. The schoolmaster reads a portion of Scripture in the church each Sunday, when the clergyman is absent; but the present man is unfit for this part of his duty. The women knit worsted stockings, night-caps, and similar trifles, which they exchange with any merchant vessels that approach their lonely isle. In these respects they greatly regret the American war; and mention with unction the happy days when they could get from an American trader a bottle of peach-brandy or rum in exchange for a pair of worsted-stockings or a dozen of eggs. The humanity of their *master* interferes much with the favourite but dangerous occupation of the islanders, which is *fowling*, that is, taking the young sea-fowl from their nests among these tremendous crags. About a fortnight before we arrived, a fine boy of fourteen had dropped from the cliff, while in prosecution of this amusement, into a roaring surf, by which he was instantly swallowed up. The unfortunate mother was labouring at the peat-moss at a little distance. These accidents do not, however, strike terror into the survivors. They regard the death of an individual engaged in these desperate exploits, as we do the fate of a brave relation who falls in battle, when the honour of his death furnishes a balm to our sorrow. It therefore requires all the tacksman's authority to prevent a practice so pregnant with danger. Like all other precarious and dangerous employments, the occupation of the crags-men renders them unwilling to labour at employments of a more steady description. The Fair Isle inhabitants are a good-looking race, more like Zetlanders than Orkneymen. Evenson, and other names of a Norwegian or Danish derivation, attest their Scandinavian descent. Return and dine at Mr. Strong's, having sent our cookery ashore, not to overburthen his hospitality. In this place, and perhaps in the very cottage now inhabited by Mr. Strong, the Duke of Medina Sidonia, Commander-in-Chief of the Invincible Armada, wintered, after losing his vessel to the eastward of the island. It was not till he had spent some weeks in this miserable abode, that he got off to Norway. Independently of the moral consideration, that, from the pitch of power in which he stood a few days before, the proudest peer of the proudest nation in Europe found himself dependent on the jealous and scanty charity of these secluded islanders, it is scarce possible not to reflect with compassion on the change of situation from the palaces of Estramadura to the hamlet of the Fair Isle—

> Dost thou wish for thy deserts, O Son of Hodeirah ?
> Dost thou long for the gales of Arabia ?[1]

'Mr. Strong gave me a curious old chair belonging to Quendale, a former proprietor of the Fair Isle, and which a more zealous antiquary would have dubbed "the Duke's chair." I will have it refitted for Abbotsford, however. About eight o'clock we take boat, amid the cheers of the inhabitants, whose minds, subdued by our splendour, had been secured by our munificence, which consisted in a moderate benefaction of whisky and tobacco, and a few shillings laid out on their staple commodities. They agreed no such day had been seen in the isle. The signal-post displayed its flags, and to recompense these distinguished marks of honour, we hung out our colours, stood into the bay, and saluted with three guns,

> Echoing from a thousand caves,

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[1] Thalaba, Book viii.

and then bear away for Orkney, leaving, if our vanity does not deceive us, a very favourable impression on the mind of the inhabitants of the Fair Isle. The tradition of the Fair Isle is unfavourable to those shipwrecked strangers, who are said to have committed several acts of violence to extort the supplies of provision, given them sparingly and with reluctance by the islanders, who were probably themselves very far from being well supplied.

'I omitted to say we were attended in the morning by two very sportive whales, but of a kind, as some of our crew who had been on board Greenland-men assured us, which it was very dangerous to attack. There were two Gravesend smacks fishing off the isle. Lord, what a long draught London makes!

'11*th August* 1814.—After a sound sleep to make amends for last night, we find, at awaking, the vessel off the Start of Sanda, the first land in the Orkneys which we could make. There a lighthouse has been erected lately upon the best construction. Landed and surveyed it. All in excellent order, and the establishment of the keepers in the same style of comfort and respectability as elsewhere, far better than the house of the master of the Fair Isle, and rivalling my own baronial mansion of Abbotsford. Go to the top of the tower and survey the island, which, as the name implies, is level, flat, and sandy, quite the reverse of those in Zetland: it is intersected by creeks and small lakes, and, though it abounds with shell marle, seems barren. There is one dreadful inconvenience of an island life, of which we had here an instance. The keeper's wife had an infant in her arms—her first-born, too, of which the poor woman had been delivered without assistance. Erskine told us of a horrid instance of malice which had been practised in this island of Sanda. A decent tenant, during the course of three or four successive years, lost to the number of twenty-five cattle, stabbed as they lay in their fold by some abominable wretch. What made the matter stranger was, that the poor man could not recollect any reason why he should have had the ill-will of a single being, only that in taking up names for the *militia*, a duty imposed upon him by the Justices, he thought he might possibly have given some unknown offence. The villain was never discovered.

'The wrecks on this coast were numerous before the erection of the lighthouse. It was not uncommon to see five or six vessels on shore at once. The goods and chattels of the inhabitants are all said to savour of *Flotsome* and *Jetsome*, as the floating wreck and that which is driven ashore are severally called. Mr. Stevenson happened to observe that the boat of a Sanda farmer had bad sails—"If it had been His (*i.e.* God's) will that you hadna built sae many lighthouses hereabout"—answered the Orcadian, with great composure—"I would have had new sails last winter." Thus do they talk and think upon these subjects; and so talking and thinking, I fear the poor mariner has little chance of any very anxious attempt to assist him. There is one wreck, a Danish vessel, now aground under our lee. These Danes are the stupidest seamen, by all accounts, that sail the sea. When this light upon the Start of Sanda was established, the Commissioners, with laudable anxiety to extend its utility, had its description and bearings translated into Danish and sent to Copenhagen. But they never attend to such trifles. The Norwegians are much better liked, as a clever, hardy, sensible people. I forgot to notice there was a Norwegian prize lying in the Sound of Lerwick, sent in by one of our cruisers. This was a queer-looking, half-decked vessel, all tattered and torn, and shaken to pieces, looking like Coleridge's Spectre Ship. It was pitiable to see such a prize. Our servants went aboard, and got one of their loaves, and gave a dreadful account of its composition. I got and cut a crust of it; it was rye-bread, with a slight mixture of pine-fir bark or sawings of deal. It was not good, but (as Charles XII. said) might be eaten. But after all, if the people can be satisfied with such bread as this, it seems hard to interdict it to them. What would a Londoner say if, instead of his roll and muffins, this black bread, relishing of tar and turpentine, were presented for his breakfast? I would to God there could be a Jehovah-jireh, "a ram caught in the thicket," to prevent the sacrifice of that people.

'The few friends who may see this Journal are much indebted for these pathetic remarks to the situation under which they are recorded; for since we left the lighthouse we have been struggling with adverse wind (pretty high too), and a very strong tide, called the Rost of the Start, which, like Sumburgh Rost, bodes no good to our roast and boiled. The worst is that this struggle carries us past a most curious spectacle, being no less than the carcases of two hundred and sixty-five whales, which have been driven ashore in Taftsness bay, now lying close under us. With all the inclination in the world, it is impossible to stand in close enough to verify this massacre of Leviathans with our own eyes, as we do not care to run the risk of being drawn ashore ourselves among the party. In fact, this species of spectacle has been of late years very common among the isles. Mr. Stevenson saw upwards of a hundred and fifty whales lying upon the shore in a bay at Unst, in his northward trip. They are not large, but are decided whales, measuring perhaps from fifteen to twenty-five feet. They are easily mastered, for the first that is wounded among the sounds and straits so common in the isles, usually runs ashore. The rest follow the blood, and, urged on by the boats behind, run ashore also. A cut with one of the long whaling knives under the back-fin is usually fatal to these huge animals. The two hundred and sixty-five whales, now lying within two or three miles of us, were driven ashore by seven boats only.

'*Five o'clock.*—We are out of the *Rost* (I detest that word), and driving fast through a long sound among low green islands, which hardly lift themselves above the sea —not a cliff or hill to be seen—what a contrast to the land we have left! We are standing for some creek or harbour, called Lingholm bay, to lie to or anchor for the night; for to pursue our course by night, and that a thick one, among these isles, and islets, and sandbanks, is out of the question—clear moonlight might do. Our sea is now moderate. But, oh gods and men! what misfortunes have travellers to record! Just as the quiet of the elements had reconciled us to the thought of dinner, we learn that an unlucky sea has found its way into the galley during the last infernal combustion, when the lee-side and bolt-sprit were constantly under water; so our soup is poisoned with salt water—our cod and haddocks, which cost ninepence this blessed morning, and would have been worth a couple of guineas in London, are soused in their primitive element—the curry is undone—and all gone to the devil. We all apply ourselves to comfort our Lord High Admiral Hamilton, whose despair for himself and the public might edify a patriot. His good-humour—which has hitherto defied every incident, aggravated even by the gout—supported by a few bad puns, and a great many fair promises on the part of the steward and cook, fortunately restores his equilibrium.

'*Eight o'clock.*—Our supplemental dinner proved excellent, and we have glided into an admirable roadstead or harbour, called Lingholm bay, formed by the small island of Lingholm embracing a small basin dividing that islet from the larger isle of Stronsay. Both, as well as Sanda, Eda, and others which we have passed, are low, green, and sandy. I have seen nothing to-day worth marking, except the sporting of a very large whale at some distance, and H.'s face at the news of the disaster in the cook-room. We are to weigh at two in the morning, and hope to reach Kirkwall, the capital of Orkney, by breakfast to-morrow. I trust there are no *rusts* or *rosts* in the road. I shall detest that word even when used to signify verd-antique or patina in the one sense, or roast venison in the other. Orkney shall begin a new volume of these exquisite memoranda.

'OMISSION.—At Lerwick the Dutch fishers had again appeared on their old haunts. A very interesting meeting took place between them and the Lerwegians, most of them being old acquaintances. They seemed very poor, and talked of having been pillaged of everything by the French, and expected to have found Lerwick ruined by the war. They have all the careful, quiet, and economical habits of their country, and go on board their busses with the utmost haste so soon as they see the Greenland sailors, who usually insult and pick quarrels with them. The great amusement of the Dutch sailors is to hire the little ponies, and ride up and down upon them. On one occasion, a good many years ago, an English sailor interrupted this cavalcade, frightened the horses, and one or two Dutchmen got tumbles. Incensed at this beyond their usual moderation, they pursued the cause of their overthrow, and wounded him with one of their knives. The wounded man went on board his vessel, the crew of which, about fifty strong, came ashore with their long flinching knives with which they cut up the whales, and falling upon the Dutchmen, though twice their numbers, drove them all into the sea, where such as could not swim were in some risk of being drowned. The instance of aggression, or rather violent retaliation, on their part, is almost solitary. In general they are extremely quiet, and employ themselves in bartering their little merchandise of gin and gingerbread for Zetland hose and night-caps.'

CHAPTER XXIX

Diary on Board the Lighthouse Yacht continued—The Orkneys—Kirkwall—Hoy—The Standing Stones of Stennis, etc.

AUGUST 1814

'12*th August* 1814.—With a good breeze and calm sea we weighed at two in the morning, and worked by short tacks up to Kirkwall bay, and find ourselves in that fine basin upon rising in the morning. The town looks well from the sea, but is chiefly indebted to the huge old cathedral that rises out of the centre. Upon landing we find it but a poor and dirty place, especially towards the harbour. Farther up the town are seen some decent old-fashioned houses, and the Sheriff's interest secures us good lodgings. Marchie goes to hunt for a pointer. The morning, which was rainy, clears up pleasantly, and Hamilton, Erskine, Duff, and I walk to Malcolm Laing's, who has a pleasant house about half a mile from the town. Our old acquaintance, though an invalid, received us kindly; he looks very poorly, and cannot walk without assistance, but seems to retain all the quick, earnest, and vivacious intelligence of his character and manner. After this visit the antiquities of the place, viz. the Bishop's palace, the Earl of Orkney's castle, and the cathedral, all situated within a stone-cast of each other. The two former are ruinous. The most prominent part of the ruins of the Bishop's palace is a large round tower, similar to that of Bothwell in architecture, but not equal to it in size. This was built by Bishop Reid, *tempore Jacobi V.*, and there is a rude statue of him in a niche in the front. At the north-east corner of the building is a square tower of greater antiquity, called the Mense or Mass Tower; but, as well as a second and smaller round tower, it is quite ruinous. A suite of apartments of different sizes fills up the space between these towers, all now ruinous. The building is said to have been of great antiquity, but was certainly in a great measure re-edified in the sixteenth century.

'Fronting this castle or palace of the Bishop, and about a gun-shot distant, is that of the Earl of Orkney. The Earl's palace was built by Patrick Stewart, Earl of Orkney, the same who erected that of Scalloway, in Shetland. It is an elegant structure, partaking at once of the character of a palace and castle. The building forms three sides of an oblong square, but one of the sides extends considerably beyond the others. The great hall must have been remarkably handsome, opening into two or three huge rounds or turrets, the lower part of which is divided by stone shafts into three windows. It has two immense chimneys, the arches or lintels of which are formed by a flat arch, as at Crichton Castle. There is another very handsome apartment communicating with the hall like a modern drawing-room, and which has, like the former, its projecting turrets. The hall is lighted by a fine Gothic-shafted window at one end, and by others on the sides. It is approached by a spacious and elegant staircase of three flights of steps. The dimensions may be sixty feet long, twenty broad, and fourteen high, but doubtless an arched roof sprung from the side walls, so that fourteen feet was only the height from the ground to the arches. Any modern architect, wishing to emulate the real Gothic architecture, and apply it to the purposes of modern splendour, might derive excellent hints from this room. The exterior ornaments are also extremely elegant. The ruins, once the residence of this haughty and oppressive Earl, are now so disgustingly nasty, that it required all the zeal of an antiquary to prosecute the above investigation. Architecture seems to have been

Earl Patrick's prevailing taste. Besides this castle and that of Scalloway, he added to or enlarged the old castle of Bressay. To accomplish these objects, he oppressed the people with severities unheard-of even in that oppressive age, drew down on himself a shameful though deserved punishment, and left these dishonoured ruins to hand down to posterity the tale of his crimes and of his fall. We may adopt, though in another sense, his own presumptuous motto—*Sic Fuit, Est, et Erit.*

'We visit the cathedral, dedicated to St. Magnus, which greeted the Sheriff's approach with a merry peal. Like that of Glasgow, this church has escaped the blind fury of Reformation. It was founded in 1138, by Ronald, Earl of Orkney, nephew of the Saint. It is of great size, being 260 feet long, or thereabout, and supported by twenty-eight Saxon pillars, of good workmanship. The round arch predominates in the building, but I think not exclusively. The steeple (once a very high spire) rises upon four pillars of great strength, which occupy each angle of the nave. Being destroyed by lightning, it was rebuilt upon a low and curtailed plan. The appearance of the building is rather massive and gloomy than elegant, and many of the exterior ornaments, carving around the doorways, etc., have been injured by time. We entered the cathedral, the whole of which is kept locked, swept, and in good order, although only the eastern end is used for divine worship. We walked some time in the nave and western end, which is left unoccupied, and has a very solemn effect as the avenue to the place of worship. There were many tombstones on the floor and elsewhere; some, doubtless, of high antiquity. One, I remarked, had the shield of arms hung by the corner, with a helmet above it of a large proportion, such as I have seen on the most ancient seals. But we had neither time nor skill to decipher what noble Orcadian lay beneath. The church is as well fitted up as could be expected; much of the old carved oak remains, but with a motley mixture of modern deal pews. All, however, is neat and clean, and does great honour to the kirk-session who maintain its decency.

I remarked particularly Earl Patrick's seat, adjoining to that of the magistrates, but surmounting it and every other in the church; it is surrounded with a carved screen of oak, rather elegant, and bears his arms and initials, and the motto I have noticed. He bears the royal arms *without any mark of bastardy* (his father was a natural son of James V.) quarterly, with a lymphad or galley, the ancient arms of the county. This circumstance was charged against him on his trial.[1] I understand the late Mr. Gilbert Laing Meason left the interest of £1000 to keep up this cathedral.

'There are in the street facing the cathedral the ruins of a much more ancient castle; a proper feudal fortress belonging to the Earls of Orkney, but called the King's Castle. It appears to have been very strong, being situated near the harbour, and having, as appears from the fragments, very massive walls. While the wicked Earl Patrick was in confinement, one of his natural sons defended this castle to extremity against the King's troops, and only surrendered when it was nearly a heap of ruins, and then under condition he should not be brought in evidence against his father.

'We dine at the inn, and drink the Prince Regent's health, being that of the day—Mr. Baikie of Tankerness dines with us.

'13*th August* 1814.—A bad morning, but clears up. No letters from Edinburgh. The country about Kirkwall is flat, and tolerably cultivated. We see oxen generally wrought in the small country carts, though they have a race of ponies, like those of Shetland, but larger. Marchie goes to shoot on a hill called Whiteford, which slopes away about two or three miles from Kirkwall. The grouse is abundant, for the gentleman who chaperons Marchie killed thirteen brace and a half, with a snipe. There are no partridges nor hares. The soil of Orkney is better, and its air more genial than Shetland ; but it is far less interesting, and possesses none of the wild and peculiar character of the more northern archipelago. All vegetables grow here freely in the gardens, and there are one or two attempts at trees where they are sheltered by walls. How ill they succeed may be conjectured from our bringing with us a quantity of brushwood, commissioned by Malcolm Laing from Aberbrothock, to be sticks to his pease. This trash we brought two hundred miles. I have little to add, except that the Orkney people have some odd superstitions about a stone on which they take oaths to Odin. Lovers often perform this ceremony in pledge of mutual faith, and are said to account it a sacred engagement.—It is agreed that we go on board after dinner, and sail with the next tide. The magistrates of Kirkwall present us with the freedom of their ancient burgh ; and Erskine, instead of being cumbered with drunken sailors, as at Lerwick, or a drunken schoolmaster, as at Fair Isle, is annoyed by his own Substitute. This will occasion his remaining two days at Kirkwall, during which time it is proposed we shall visit the lighthouse upon the dangerous rocks called the Skerries, in the Pentland Frith ; and then, returning to the eastern side of Pomona, take up the counsellor at Stromness. It is further settled that we leave Marchie with Erskine to get another day's shooting. On board at ten o'clock, after a little bustle in expediting our domestics, washerwomen, etc.

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[1] 'This noted oppressor was finally brought to trial, and beheaded at the Cross of Edinburgh [6th February 1614]. It is said that the King's mood was considerably heated against him by some ill-chosen and worse written Latin inscriptions with which his father and himself had been unlucky enough to decorate some of their insular palaces. In one of these, Earl Robert, the father, had given his own designation thus:—"Orcadiæ Comes *Rex* Jacobi Quinti Filius." In this case he was not, perhaps, guilty of anything worse than bad Latin. But James VI., who had a keen nose for puzzling out treason, and with whom an assault and battery upon Priscian ranked in nearly the same degree of crime, had little doubt that the use of the nominative *Rex*, instead of the genitive *Regis*, had a treasonable savour.'—Scott's Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. xxiii. p. 232.

'14*th August* 1814.—Sail about four, and in rounding the mainland of Orkney, called Pomona, encounter a very heavy sea ; about ten o'clock, get into the Sound of Holm or Ham, a fine smooth current meandering away between two low green islands, which have little to characterise them. On the right of the Sound is the mainland, and a deep bay called Scalpa Flow indents it up to within two miles of Kirkwall. A canal through this neck of the island would be of great consequence to the burgh. We see the steeple and church of Kirkwall across the island very distinctly. Getting out of the Sound of Holm, we stand in to the harbour or roadstead of Widewall, where we find seven or eight foreign vessels bound for Ireland, and a sloop belonging to the lighthouse service. These roadsteads are common all through the Orkneys, and afford excellent shelter for small vessels. The day is pleasant and sunny, but the breeze is too high to permit landing at the Skerries. Agree, therefore, to stand over for the mainland of Scotland, and visit Thurso. Enter the Pentland Frith, so celebrated for the strength and fury of its tides, which is boiling even in this pleasant weather; we see a large ship battling with this heavy current, and though with all her canvas set and a breeze, getting more and more involved. See the two Capes of Dungsby or Duncansby, and Dunnet-head, between which lies the celebrated John o' Groat's house, on the north-eastern extremity of Scotland. The shores of Caithness rise bold and rocky before us, a contrast to the Orkneys, which are all low, excepting the Island of Hoy. On Duncansby-head appear some remarkable rocks, like towers, called the Stacks of Duncansby. Near this shore runs the remarkable breaking tide called the *Merry Men of Mey*, whence Mackenzie takes the scenery of a poem—

> Where the dancing Men of Mey,
> Speed the current to the land.[1]

Here, according to his locality, the Caithness man witnessed the vision, in which was introduced the song translated by Gray, under the title of the Fatal Sisters. On this subject, Mr. Baikie told me the following remarkable circumstance:—A clergyman told him, that while some remnants of the Norse were yet spoken in North Ronaldsha, he carried thither the translation of Mr. Gray, then newly published, and read it to some of the old people as referring to the ancient history of their islands. But so soon as he had proceeded a little way, they exclaimed they knew it very well in the original, and had often sung it to himself when he asked them for an old Norse song; they called it *The Enchantresses*.—The breeze dies away between two wicked little islands called Swona and Stroma, the latter belonging to Caithness, the former to Orkney. —*Nota Bene*. The inhabitants of the rest of the Orcades despise those of Swona for eating limpets, as being the last of human meannesses. Every land has its fashions. The Fair-Islesmen disdain Orkney-men for eating dog-fish. Both islands have dangerous reefs and whirlpools, where, even, in this fine day, the tide rages furiously. Indeed, the large high unbroken billows, which at every swell hide from our deck each distant object, plainly intimate what a dreadful current this must be when vexed by high or adverse winds. Finding ourselves losing ground in the tide, and unwilling to waste time, we give up Thurso—run back into the roadstead or bay of Long-Hope, and anchor under the fort. The bay has four entrances and safe anchorage in most winds, and having become a great rendezvous for shipping (there are nine vessels lying here at present), has been an object of attention with Government.

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[1] Henry Mackenzie's Introduction to 'The Fatal Sisters.'—Works, 1808, vol. viii. p. 63.

'Went ashore after dinner, and visited the fort, which is only partly completed; it is a *flêche* to the sea, with eight guns, twenty-four pounders, but without any land defences; the guns are mounted *en barbette*, without embrasures, each upon a kind of moveable stage, which stage wheeling upon a pivot in front, and traversing by means of wheels behind, can be pointed in any direction that may be thought necessary. Upon this stage, the gun-carriage moves forward and recoils, and the depth of the parapet shelters the men even better than an embrasure; at a little distance from this battery they are building a Martello tower, which is to cross the fire of the battery, and also that of another projected tower upon the opposite point of the bay. The expedience of these towers seems excessively problematical. Supposing them impregnable, or nearly so, a garrison of fourteen or fifteen men may be always blockaded by a very trifling number, while the enemy dispose of all in the vicinity at their pleasure. In the case of Long-Hope, for instance, a frigate might disembark 100 men, take the fort in the rear, where it is undefended even by a palisade, destroy the magazines, spike and dismount the cannon, carry off or cut out any vessels in the roadstead, and accomplish all the purposes that could bring them to so remote a spot, in spite of a serjeant's party in the Martello tower, and without troubling themselves about them at all. Meanwhile, Long-Hope will one day turn out a flourishing place; there will soon be taverns and slop-shops, where sailors rendezvous in such numbers; then will come quays, docks, and warehouses; and then a thriving town. Amen, so be it. This is the first fine day we have enjoyed to an end since Sunday, 31st ult. Rainy, cold, and hazy have been our voyages around these wild islands; I hope the weather begins to mend, though Mr. Wilson, our master, threatens a breeze to-morrow. We are to attempt the Skerries, if possible; if not, we will, I believe, go to Stromness.

'15*th August* 1814.—Fine morning; we get again into the Pentland Frith, and with the aid of a pilot-boat belonging to the lighthouse service, from South Ronaldsha, we attempt the Skerries. Notwithstanding the fair weather, we have a specimen of the violence of the flood-tide, which forms whirlpools on the shallow sunken rocks by the islands of Swona and Stroma, and in the deep water makes strange, smooth, whirling, and swelling eddies, called by the sailors *wells*. We run through the *wells of Tuftile* in particular, which, in the least stress of weather, wheel a large ship round and round, without respect either to helm or sails. Hence the distinction of *wells* and *waves* in old English; the *well* being that smooth, glassy, oily-looking eddy, the force of which seems to the eye almost resistless. The bursting of the waves in foam around these strange eddies has a bewildering and confused appearance, which it is impossible to describe. Get off the Skerries about ten o'clock, and land easily; it is the first time a boat has got there for several days. The *Skerries*[1] is an island about sixty acres, of fine short herbage, belonging to Lord Dundas; it is surrounded by a reef of precipitous rocks, not very high, but inaccessible, unless where the ocean has made ravines among them, and where stairs have been cut down to the water for the lighthouse service. Those inlets have a romantic appearance, and have been christened by the sailors, the Parliament House, the Seals' Lying-in-Hospital, etc. The last inlet, after rushing through a deep chasm, which is open overhead, is continued underground, and then again opens to the sky in the middle of the island: in this hole the seals bring out their whelps; when the tide is high, the waves rise up through this aperture in the middle of the isle—like the blowing of a whale in noise and appearance. There is another round cauldron of solid rock, to which the waves have access through a natural arch in the rock, having another and lesser arch rising just above it; in hard weather, the waves rush through both apertures with a horrid noise; the workmen called it the Carron Blast, and indeed, the variety of noises which issued from the abyss, somewhat reminded me of that engine. Take my rifle, and walk round the cliffs in search of seals, but see none, and only disturb the digestion of certain aldermen-cormorants, who were sitting on the points of the crags after a good fish breakfast; only made one good shot out of four. The lighthouse is too low, and on the old construction, yet it is of the last importance. The keeper is an old man-of-war's-man, of whom Mr. Stevenson observed that he was a great swearer when he first came; but after a year or two's residence in this solitary abode, became a changed man. There are about fifty head of cattle on the island; they must be got in and off with great danger and difficulty. There is no water upon the isle, except what remains after rain in some pools; these sometimes dry in summer, and the cattle are reduced to great straits. Leave the isle about one; and the wind and tide being favourable, crowd all sail, and get on at the rate of fourteen miles an hour. Soon reach our old anchorage at the Long-Hope, and passing, stand to the north-westward, up the sound of Hoy, for Stromness.

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[1] 'A Skerrie means a flattish rock which the sea does not overflow.'—*Edmondstone's View of the Zetlands.*

'I should have mentioned that in going down the Pentland Frith this morning we saw Johnnie Groat's house, or rather the place where it stood, now occupied by a storehouse. Our pilot opines there was no such man as Johnnie Groat, for, he says, he cannot hear that anybody *ever saw him*. This reasoning would put down most facts of antiquity. They gather shells on the shore, called *Johnnie Groat's buckies*, but I cannot procure any at present. I may also add, that the interpretation given to *wells* may apply to the *Wells of Slain*, in the fine ballad of Clerk Colvill; such eddies in the romantic vicinity of Slains Castle would be a fine place for a mermaid.[1]

'Our wind fails us, and what is worse, becomes westerly; the Sound has now the appearance of a fine land-locked bay, the passages between the several islands being scarce visible. We have a superb view of Kirkwall Cathedral, with a strong gleam of sunshine upon it. Gloomy weather begins to collect around us, particularly on the island of Hoy, which, covered with gloom and vapour, now assumes a majestic mountainous character. On Pomona we pass the Hill of Orphir, which reminds me of the clergyman of that parish, who was called to account for some of his inaccuracies to the General Assembly; one charge he held particularly cheap, viz.

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[1] Clerk Colvill falls a sacrifice to a meeting with 'a fair Mermaid,' whom he found washing her 'Sark of Silk' on this romantic shore. He had been warned by his 'gay lady' in these words:—

O promise me now, Clerk Colvill,
  Or it will cost ye muckle strife,
Ride never by the Wells of Slane,
  If ye wad live and brook your life.

that of drunkenness. "Reverend Moderator," said he, in reply, "I *do* drink, as other gentlemen do." This Orphir of the north must not be confounded with the Ophir of the south. From the latter came gold, silver, and precious stones; the former seems to produce little except peats. Yet these are precious commodities, which some of the Orkney Isles altogether want, and lay waste and burn the turf of their land instead of importing coal from Newcastle. The Orcadians seem by no means an alert or active race; they neglect the excellent fisheries which lie under their very noses, and in their mode of managing their boats, as well as in the general tone of urbanity and intelligence, are excelled by the less favoured Zetlanders. I observe they always crowd their boat with people in the bows, being the ready way to send her down in any awkward circumstance. There are remains of their Norwegian descent and language in North Ronaldsha, an isle I regret we did not see. A missionary preacher came ashore there a year or two since, but being a very little black-bearded unshaved man, the seniors of the isle suspected him of being an ancient Pecht or Pict, and *no canny*, of course. The schoolmaster came down to entreat our worthy Mr. Stevenson, then about to leave the island, to come up and verify whether the preacher was an ancient Pecht, yea or no. Finding apologies were in vain, he rode up to the house where the unfortunate preacher, after three nights' watching, had got to bed, little conceiving under what odious suspicion he had fallen. As Mr. S. declined disturbing him, his boots were produced, which being a *little—little—very little* pair, confirmed, in the opinion of all the bystanders, the suspicion of Pechtism. Mr. S. therefore found it necessary to go into the poor man's sleeping apartment, where he recognised one Campbell, heretofore an ironmonger in Edinburgh, but who had put his hand for some years to the missionary plough; of course he warranted his quondam acquaintance to be no ancient Pecht. Mr. Stevenson carried the same schoolmaster who figured in the adventure of the Pecht, to the mainland of Scotland, to be examined for his office.

He was extremely desirous to see a tree; and, on seeing one, desired to know what *girss* it was that grew at the top on't—the leaves appearing to him to be grass. They still speak a little Norse, and indeed I hear every day words of that language; for instance, *Ja, kul*, for "*Yes, sir.*" We creep slowly up Hoy Sound, working under the Pomona shore; but there is no hope of reaching Stromness till we have the assistance of the evening tide. The channel now seems like a Highland loch; not the least ripple on the waves. The passage is narrowed, and (to the eye) blocked up by the interposition of the green and apparently fertile isle of Græmsay, the property of Lord Armadale.[1] Hoy looks yet grander, from comparing its black and steep mountains with this verdant isle. To add to the beauty of the Sound, it is rendered lively by the successive appearance of seven or eight whaling vessels from Davies' Straits; large strong ships, which pass successively, with all their sails set, enjoying the little wind that is. Many of these vessels display the *garland;* that is, a wreath of ribbons which the young fellows on board have got from their sweethearts, or come by otherwise, and which hangs between the foremast and mainmast, surmounted sometimes by a small model of the vessel. This garland is hung up upon the 1st May, and remains till they come into port. I believe we shall dodge here till the tide makes about nine, and then get into Stromness: no boatman or sailor in Orkney thinks of the wind in comparison of the tides and currents. We must not complain, though the night gets rainy, and the Hill of Hoy is now completely invested with vapour and mist. In the forepart of the day we executed very cleverly a task of considerable difficulty and even danger.

'*16th August* 1814.—Get into Stromness bay, and anchor before the party are up. A most decided rain all night. The bay is formed by a deep indention in the mainland, or Pomona; on one side of which stands Stromness—a fishing village and harbour of *call* for the Davies' Straits whalers, as Lerwick is for the Greenlanders. Betwixt the vessels we met yesterday, seven or eight which passed us this morning, and several others still lying in the bay, we have seen between twenty and thirty of these large ships in this remote place. The opposite side of Stromness bay is protected by Hoy, and Græmsay lies between them; so that the bay seems quite land-locked, and the contrast between the mountains of Hoy, the soft verdure of Græmsay, and the swelling hill of Orphir on the mainland, has a beautiful effect. The day clears up, and Mr. Rae, Lord Armadale's factor, comes off from his house, called Clestrom, upon the shore opposite to Stromness, to breakfast with us. We go ashore with him. His farm is well cultivated, and he has procured an excellent breed of horses from Lanarkshire, of which county he is a native; strong hardy Galloways, fit for labour or hacks. By this we profited, as Mr. Rae mounted us all, and we set off to visit the Standing Stones of Stenhouse or Stennis.

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[1] Sir William Honeyman, Bart.—a Judge of the Court of Session by the title of Lord Armadale.

'At the upper end of the bay, about half-way between Clestrom and Stromness, there extends a loch of considerable size, of fresh water, but communicating with the sea by apertures left in a long bridge or causeway which divides them. After riding about two miles along this lake, we open another called the Loch of Harray, of about the same dimensions, and communicating with the lower lake, as the former does with the sea, by a stream, over which is constructed a causeway, with openings to suffer the flow and reflux of the water, as both lakes are affected by the tide. Upon the tongues of land which, approaching each other, divide the lakes of Stennis and Harray, are situated the Standing Stones. The isthmus on the eastern side exhibits a semicircle of immensely large upright pillars of unhewn stone, surrounded by a mound of earth. As the mound is discontinued, it does not seem that the circle was ever completed. The flat or open part of the semicircle looks up a plain, where, at a distance, is seen a large tumulus. The highest of these stones may be about sixteen or seventeen feet, and I think there are none so low as twelve feet. At irregular distances are pointed out other unhewn pillars of the same kind. One, a little to the westward, is perforated with a round hole, perhaps to bind a victim; or rather, I conjecture, for the purpose of solemnly attesting the deity, which the Scandinavians did by passing their head through a ring, — *vide* Eyrbiggia Saga. Several barrows are scattered around this strange monument. Upon the opposite isthmus is a complete circle, of ninety-five paces in diameter, surrounded by standing stones, less in size than the others, being only from ten or twelve to fourteen feet in height, and four in breadth. A deep trench is drawn around this circle on the outside of the pillars, and four tumuli, or mounds of earth, are regularly placed, two on each side.

'Stonehenge excels these monuments, but I fancy they are otherwise unparalleled in Britain. The idea that such circles were exclusively Druidical is now justly exploded. The northern nations all used such erections to mark their places of meeting, whether for religious purposes or civil policy; and there is repeated mention of them in the Sagas. *See* the Eyrbiggia Saga,[1] for the establishment of the Helga-fels, or holy mount, where the people held their Comitia, and where sacrifices were offered to Thor and Woden. About the centre of the semicircle is a broad flat stone, probably once the altar on which human victims were sacrificed.—Mr. Rae seems to think the common people have no tradition of the purpose of these stones, but probably he has not enquired particularly. He admits they look upon them with superstitious reverence; and it is evident that those which have fallen down (about half the original number) have been wasted by time, and not demolished. The materials of these monuments lay near, for the shores and bottom of the lake are of the same kind of rock. How they were raised, transported, and placed upright, is a puzzling question. In our ride back, noticed a round entrenchment, or *tumulus*, called the Hollow of Tongue.

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[1] Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. v. p. 355.

'The hospitality of Mrs. Rae detained us to an early dinner at Clestrom. About four o'clock took our long-boat and rowed down the bay to visit the Dwarfie Stone of Hoy. We have all day been pleased with the romantic appearance of that island, for though the Hill of Hoy is not very high, perhaps about 1200 feet, yet rising perpendicularly (almost) from the sea, and being very steep and furrowed with ravines, and catching all the mists from the western ocean, it has a noble and picturesque effect in every point of view. We land upon the island, and proceed up a long and very swampy valley broken into peat-bogs. The one side of this valley is formed by the Mountain of Hoy, the other by another steep hill, having at the top a circular belt of rock; upon the slope of this last hill, and just where the principal mountain opens into a wide and precipitous and circular *corrie* or hollow, lies the Dwarfie Stone. It is a huge sandstone rock, of one solid stone, being about seven feet high, twenty-two feet long, and seventeen feet broad. The upper end of this stone is hewn into a sort of apartment containing two beds of stone and a passage between them. The uppermost and largest is five feet eight inches long, by two feet broad, and is furnished with a stone pillow. The lower, supposed for the Dwarf's Wife, is shorter, and rounded off, instead of being square at the corners. The entrance may be about three feet and a half square. Before it lies a huge stone, apparently intended to serve the purpose of a door, and shaped accordingly. In the top, over the passage which divides the beds, there is a hole to serve for a window or chimney, which was doubtless originally wrought square with irons, like the rest of the work, but has been broken out by violence into a shapeless hole. Opposite to this stone, and proceeding from it in a line down the valley, are several small barrows, and there is a very large one on the same line, at the spot where we landed. This seems to indicate that the monument is of heathen times, and probably was meant as the temple of some northern edition of the *Dii Manes*. There are no symbols of Christian devotion

—and the door is to the westward; it therefore does not seem to have been the abode of a hermit, as Dr. Barry[1] has conjectured. The Orcadians have no tradition on the subject, excepting that they believe it to be the work of a dwarf, to whom, like their ancestors, they attribute supernatural powers and malevolent disposition. They conceive he may be seen sometimes sitting at the door of his abode, but he vanishes on a nearer approach. Whoever inhabited this den certainly enjoyed

> Pillow cold and sheets not warm.

'Duff, Stevenson, and I, now walk along the skirts of the Hill of Hoy, to rejoin Robert Hamilton, who in the meanwhile had rode down to the clergyman's house, the wet and boggy walk not suiting his gout. Arrive at the manse completely wet, and drink tea there. The clergyman (Mr. Hamilton) has procured some curious specimens of natural history for Bullock's Museum, particularly a pair of fine eaglets. He has just got another of the golden, or white kind, which he intends to send him. The eagle, with every other ravenous bird, abounds among the almost inaccessible precipices of Hoy, which afford them shelter, while the moors, abounding with grouse, and the small uninhabited islands and holms, where sheep and lambs are necessarily left unwatched, as well as the all-sustaining ocean, give these birds of prey the means of support. The clergyman told us that a man was very lately alive in the island of , who, when an infant, was transported from thence by an eagle over a broad sound, or arm of the sea, to the bird's nest in Hoy. Pursuit being instantly made, and the eagle's nest being known, the infant was found there playing with the young eaglets. A more ludicrous instance of transportation he himself witnessed. Walking in the fields, he heard the squeaking of a pig for some time, without being able to discern whence it proceeded, until looking up, he beheld the unfortunate grunter in the talons of an eagle, who soared away with him towards the summit of Hoy. From this it may be conjectured that the island is very thinly inhabited; in fact, we only saw two or three little wigwams. After tea we walked a mile farther, to a point where the boat was lying, in order to secure the advantage of the flood-tide. We rowed with toil across one stream of tide, which set strongly up between Græmsay and Hoy; but, on turning the point of Græmsay, the other branch of the same flood-tide carried us with great velocity alongside our yacht, which we reached about nine o'clock. Between riding, walking, and running, we have spent a very active and entertaining day.

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[1] History of the Orkney Islands, by the Rev. George Barry, D.D. 4to. Edinburgh: 1805.

'*Domestic Memoranda.*—The eggs on Zetland and Orkney are very indifferent, having an earthy taste, and being very small. But the hogs are an excellent breed—queer wild-looking creatures, with heads like wild-boars, but making capital bacon.'

CHAPTER XXX

Diary continued—Stromness—Bessy Millie's Charm—Cape Wrath—Cave of Snowe—The Hebrides—Scalpa, etc.

1814

'*Off Stromness*, 17*th August* 1814.—Went on shore after breakfast, and found W. Erskine and Marjoribanks had been in this town all last night, without our hearing of them or they of us. No letters from Abbotsford or Edinburgh. Stromness is a little dirty straggling town, which cannot be traversed by a cart, or even by a horse, for there are stairs up and down, even in the principal streets. We paraded its whole length like turkeys in a string, I suppose to satisfy ourselves that there was a worse town in the Orkneys than the metropolis, Kirkwall. We clomb, by steep and dirty lanes, an eminence rising above the town, and commanding a fine view. An old hag lives in a wretched cabin on this height, and subsists by selling winds. Each captain of a merchantman, between jest and earnest, gives the old woman sixpence, and she boils her kettle to procure a favourable gale. She was a miserable figure; upwards of ninety, she told us, and dried up like a mummy. A sort of clay-coloured cloak, folded over her head, corresponded in colour to her corpselike complexion. Fine light-blue eyes, and nose and chin that almost met, and a ghastly expression of cunning, gave her quite the effect of Hecate. She told us she remembered *Gow the pirate*, who was born near the

House of Clestrom, and afterwards commenced buccaneer. He came to his native country about 1725, with a *snow* which he commanded, carried off two women from one of the islands, and committed other enormities. At length, while he was dining in a house in the island of Eda, the islanders, headed by Malcolm Laing's grandfather, made him prisoner, and sent him to London, where he was hanged. While at Stromness, he made love to a Miss Gordon, who pledged her faith to him by shaking hands, an engagement which, in her idea, could not be dissolved without her going to London to seek back again her "faith and troth," by shaking hands with him again after execution. We left our Pythoness, who assured us there was nothing evil in the intercession she was to make for us, but that we were only to have a fair wind through the benefit of her prayers. She repeated a sort of rigmarole which I suppose she had ready for such occasions, and seemed greatly delighted and surprised with the amount of our donation, as everybody gave her a trifle, our faithful Captain Wilson making the regular offering on behalf of the ship. So much for buying a wind. Bessy Millie's habitation is airy enough for Æolus himself, but if she is a special favourite with that divinity, he has a strange choice. In her house I remarked a quern, or hand-mill.—A cairn, a little higher, commands a beautiful view of the bay, with its various entrances and islets. Here we found the vestiges of a bonfire, lighted in memory of the battle of Bannockburn, concerning which every part of Scotland has its peculiar traditions. The Orcadians say that a Norwegian prince, then their ruler, called by them Harold, brought 1400 men of Orkney to the assistance of Bruce, and that the King, at a critical period of the engagement, touched him with his scabbard, saying, "The day is against us."—"I trust," returned the Orcadian, "your Grace will *venture again*"; which has given rise to their motto, and passed into a proverb. On board at half-past three, and find Bessy Millie a woman of her word, for the expected breeze has sprung up, if it but last us till we double Cape

Wrath. Weigh anchor (I hope) to bid farewell to Orkney.[1]

'The land in Orkney is, generally speaking, excellent, and what is not fitted for the plough is admirably adapted for pasture. But the cultivation is very bad, and the mode of using these extensive commons, where they tear up, without remorse, the turf of the finest pasture, in order to make fuel, is absolutely execrable. The practice has already peeled and exhausted much fine land, and must in the end ruin the country entirely. In other respects, their mode of cultivation is to manure for barley and oats, and then manure again, and this without the least idea of fallow or green crops. Mr. Rae thinks that his example—and he farms very well—has had no effect upon the natives, except in the article of potatoes, which they now cultivate a little more, but crops of turnips are unknown. For this slovenly labour the Orcadians cannot, like the Shetland men, plead the occupation of fishing, which is wholly neglected by them, excepting that about this time of the year all the people turn out for the dogfish, the liver of which affords oil, and the bodies are a food as much valued here by the lower classes as it is contemned in Shetland. We saw nineteen boats out at this work. But cod, tusk, ling, haddocks, etc., which abound round these isles, are totally neglected. Their inferiority in husbandry is therefore to be ascribed to the prejudices of the people, who are all peasants of the lowest order. On Lord Armadale's estate, the number of tenantry amounts to 300, and the average of rent is about seven pounds each. What can be expected from such a distribution? and how is the necessary restriction to take place, without the greatest immediate distress and hardship to these poor creatures? It is the hardest chapter in Economics; and if I were an Orcadian laird, I feel I should shuffle on with the old useless creatures, in contradiction to my better judgment. Stock is improved in these islands, and the horses seem to be better bred than in Shetland; at least, I have seen more clever animals. The good horses find a ready sale; Mr. Rae gets twenty guineas readily for a colt of his rearing—to be sure, they are very good.

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[1] Lord Teignmouth, in his recent 'Sketches of the Coasts and Islands of Scotland,' says—'The publication of the Pirate satisfied the natives of Orkney as to the authorship of the Waverley Novels. It was remarked by those who had accompanied Sir Walter Scott in his excursions in these Islands, that the vivid descriptions which the work contains were confined to those scenes which he visited.'—Vol. i. p. 28.

'*Six o'Clock.*—Our breeze has carried us through the Mouth of Hoy, and so into the Atlantic. The north-western face of the island forms a ledge of high perpendicular cliffs, which might have surprised us more, had we not already seen the Ord of Bressay, the Noup of Noss, and the precipices of the Fair Isle. But these are formidable enough. One projecting cliff, from the peculiarities of its form, has acquired the name of the Old Man of Hoy, and is well known to mariners as marking the entrance to the Mouth. The other jaw of this mouth is formed by a lower range of crags, called the Burgh of Birsa. The access through this strait would be easy, were it not for the Island of Græmsay, lying in the very throat of the passage, and two other islands covering the entrance to the harbour of Stromness. Græmsay is infamous for shipwrecks, and the chance of these *God-sends*, as they were impiously called, is said sometimes to have doubled the value of the land. In Stromness, I saw many of the sad relics of shipwrecked vessels applied to very odd purposes, and indeed to all sorts of occasions. The gates, or *grinds*, as they are here called, are usually of ship planks and timbers, and so are their bridges, etc. These casualties are now much less common since the lights on the Skerries and the Start have been established. Enough of memoranda for the present.—We have hitherto kept our course pretty well; and a King's ship about eighteen guns or so, two miles upon our lee-boom, has shortened sail, apparently to take us under her wing, which may not be altogether unnecessary in the latitude of Cape Wrath, where several vessels have been taken by Yankee-Doodle. The sloop-of-war looks as if she could bite hard, and is supposed by our folks to be the Malay. If we can speak the captain, we will invite him to some grouse, or send him some, as he likes best, for Marchie's campaign was very successful.

'18*th August* 1814.—Bessy Millie's charm has failed us. After a rainy night, the wind has come round to the north-west, and is getting almost contrary. We have weathered Whitten-head, however, and Cape Wrath, the north-western extremity of Britain, is now in sight. The weather gets rainy and squally. Hamilton and Erskine keep their berths. Duff and I sit upon deck, like two great bears, wrapt in watch-cloaks, the sea flying over us every now and then. At length, after a sound buffeting with the rain, the doubling Cape Wrath with this wind is renounced as impracticable, and we stand away for Loch Eribol, a lake running into the extensive country of Lord Reay. No sickness ; we begin to get hardy sailors in that particular. The ground rises upon us very bold and mountainous, especially a very high steep mountain, called Ben-y-Hope, at the head of a lake called Loch Hope. The weather begins to mitigate as we get under the lee of the land. Loch Eribol opens, running up into a wild and barren scene of crags and hills. The proper anchorage is said to be at the head of the lake, but to go eight miles up so narrow an inlet would expose us to be wind-bound. A pilot boat comes off from Mr. Anderson's house, a principal tacksman of Lord Reay's. After some discussion we anchor within a reef of sunken rocks, nearly opposite to Mr. Anderson's house of Rispan ; the situation is not, we are given to understand, altogether without danger if the wind should blow hard, but it is now calm. In front of our anchorage a few shapeless patches of land, not exceeding a few yards in diameter, have been prepared for corn by the spade, and bear wretched crops. All the rest of the view is utter barrenness ; the distant hills, we are told, contain plenty of deer, being part of a forest belonging to Lord Reay, who is proprietor of all the extensive range of desolation now under our eye. The water has been kinder than the land, for we hear of plenty of salmon, and haddocks, and lobsters, and send our faithful minister of the interior, John Peters, the steward, to procure some of those good things of this very indifferent land, and to invite Mr. Anderson to dine with us. Four o'clock,—

John has just returned, successful in both commissions, and the evening concludes pleasantly.

'*19th August* 1814, *Loch Eribol, near Cape Wrath.*—Went off before eight A.M. to breakfast with our friend Mr. Anderson. His house, invisible from the vessel at her moorings, and, indeed, from any part of the entrance into Loch Eribol, is a very comfortable one, lying obscured behind a craggy eminence. A little creek, winding up behind the crag, and in front of the house, forms a small harbour, and gives a romantic air of concealment and snugness. There we found a ship upon the stocks, built from the keel by a Highland carpenter, who had magnanimously declined receiving assistance from any of the ship-carpenters who happened to be here occasionally, lest it should be said he could not have finished his task without their aid. An ample Highland breakfast of excellent new-taken herring, equal to those of Lochfine, fresh haddocks, fresh eggs, and fresh butter, not forgetting the bottle of whisky, and bannocks of barley, and oat-cakes, with the Lowland luxuries of tea and coffee. After breakfast, took the long-boat, and under Mr. Anderson's pilotage, row to see a remarkable natural curiosity, called Uamh Smowe, or the Largest Cave. Stevenson, Marchie, and Duff go by land. Take the fowling-piece, and shoot some sea-fowl and a large hawk of an uncommon appearance. Fire four shots, and kill three times. After rowing about three miles to the westward of the entrance from the sea to Loch Eribol, we enter a creek, between two ledges of very high rocks, and landing, find ourselves in front of the wonder we came to see. The exterior apartment of the cavern opens under a tremendous rock, facing the creek, and occupies the full space of the ravine where we landed. From the top of the rock to the base of the cavern, as we afterwards discovered by plumb, is eighty feet, of which the height of the arch is fifty-three feet; the rest, being twenty-seven feet, is occupied by the precipitous rock under which it opens; the width is fully in proportion to this great height, being 110 feet. The depth of this exterior cavern is 200 feet, and it is apparently supported by an intermediate column of natural rock. Being open to daylight and the sea air, the cavern is perfectly clean and dry, and the sides are incrusted with stalactites. This immense cavern is so well proportioned that I was not aware of its extraordinary height and extent till I saw our two friends, who had somewhat preceded us, having made the journey by land, appearing like pigmies among its recesses. Afterwards, on entering the cave, I climbed up a sloping rock at its extremity, and was much struck with the prospect, looking outward from this magnificent arched cavern upon our boat and its crew, the view being otherwise bounded by the ledge of rocks which formed each side of the creek. We now propose to investigate the farther wonders of the cave of Smowe. In the right or west side of the cave opens an interior cavern of a different aspect. The height of this second passage may be about twelve or fourteen feet, and its breadth about six or eight, neatly formed into a Gothic portal by the hand of nature. The lower part of this porch is closed by a ledge of rock, rising to the height of between five and six feet, and which I can compare to nothing but the hatch-door of a shop. Beneath this hatch a brook finds its way out, forms a black deep pool before the Gothic archway, and then escapes to the sea, and forms the creek in which we landed. It is somewhat difficult to approach this strange pass, so as to gain a view into the interior of the cavern. By clambering along a broken and dangerous cliff, you can, however, look into it; but only so far as to see a twilight space filled with dark-coloured water in great agitation, and representing a subterranean lake, moved by some fearful convulsion of nature. How this pond is supplied with water you cannot see from even this point of vantage, but you are made partly sensible of the truth by a sound like the dashing of a sullen cataract within the bowels of the earth. Here the adventure has usually been abandoned, and Mr. Anderson only mentioned two travellers whose curiosity had led them farther. We were resolved, however, to see the adventures of this new cave of Montesinos to an end. Duff had already secured the use of a fisher's boat and its hands, our own long-boat being too heavy and far too valuable to be ventured upon this Cocytus. Accordingly the skiff was dragged up the brook to the rocky ledge or hatch which barred up the interior cavern, and there, by force of hands, our boat's crew and two or three fishers first raised the boat's bow upon the ledge of rock, then brought her to a level, being poised upon that narrow hatch, and lastly launched her down into the dark and deep subterranean lake within. The entrance was so narrow, and the boat so clumsy, that we, who were all this while clinging to the rock like sea-fowl, and with scarce more secure footing, were greatly alarmed for the safety of our trusty sailors. At the instant when the boat sloped inward to the cave, a Highlander threw himself into it with great boldness and dexterity, and, at the expense of some bruises, shared its precipitate fall into the waters under the earth. This dangerous exploit was to prevent the boat drifting away from us, but a cord at its stern would have been a safer and surer expedient.

'When our *enfant perdu* had recovered breath and legs, he brought the boat back to the entrance, and took us in. We now found ourselves embarked on a deep black pond of an irregular form, the rocks rising like a dome all around us, and high over our heads. The light, a sort of dubious twilight, was derived from two chasms in the roof of the vault, for that offered by the entrance was but trifling. Down one of those rents there poured from the height of eighty feet, in a sheet of foam, the brook, which, after supplying the subterranean pond with water, finds its way out beneath the ledge of rock that blocks its entrance. The other skylight, if I may so term it, looks out at the clear blue sky. It is impossible for description to explain the impression made by so strange a place, to which we had been conveyed with so much difficulty. The cave itself, the pool, the cataract, would have been each separate objects of wonder, but all united together, and affecting at once the ear, the eye, and the imagination, their effect is indescribable. The length of this pond, or loch as the people here call it, is seventy feet over, the breadth about thirty at the narrowest point, and it is of great depth.

'As we resolved to proceed, we directed the boat to a natural arch on the right hand, or west side of the cataract. This archway was double, a high arch being placed above a very low one, as in a Roman aqueduct. The ledge of rock which forms this lower arch is not above two feet and a half high above the water, and under this we were to pass in the boat; so that we were fain to pile ourselves flat upon each other like a layer of herrings. By this judicious disposition we were pushed in safety beneath this low-browed rock into a region of utter darkness. For this, however, we were provided, for we had a tinder-box and lights. The view back upon the twilight lake we had crossed, its sullen eddies wheeling round and round, and its echoes resounding to the ceaseless thunder of the waterfall, seemed dismal enough, and was aggravated by temporary darkness, and in some degree by a sense of danger. The lights, however, dispelled the latter sensation, if it prevailed to any extent, and we now found ourselves in a narrow cavern, sloping somewhat upward from the water. We got out of the boat, proceeded along some slippery places upon shelves of the rock, and gained the dry land. I cannot say *dry*, excepting comparatively. We were then in an arched cave, twelve feet high in the roof, and about eight feet in breadth, which went winding into the bowels of the earth for about an hundred feet. The sides, being (like those of the whole cavern) of limestone rock, were covered with stalactites, and with small drops of water like dew, glancing like ten thousand thousand sets of birthday diamonds under the glare of our lights. In some places these stalactites branch out into broad and curious ramifications, resembling coral and the foliage of submarine plants.

'When we reached the extremity of this passage, we found it declined suddenly to a horrible ugly gulf, or well, filled with dark water, and of great depth, over which the rock closed. We threw in stones, which indicated great profundity by their sound; and growing more familiar with the horrors of this den, we sounded with an oar, and found about ten feet depth at the entrance, but discovered in the same manner that the gulf extended under the rock, deepening as it went, God knows how far. Imagination can figure few deaths more horrible than to be sucked under these rocks into some unfathomable abyss, where your corpse could never be found to give intimation of your fate. A water kelpie, or an evil spirit of any aquatic propensities, could not choose a fitter abode; and, to say the truth, I believe at our first entrance, and when all our feelings were afloat at the novelty of the scene, the unexpected plashing of a seal would have routed the whole dozen of us. The mouth of this ugly gulf was all covered with slimy alluvious substances, which led Mr. Stevenson to observe that it could have no separate source, but must be fed from the waters of the outer lake and brook, as it lay upon the same level, and seemed to rise and fall with them, without having anything to indicate a separate current of its own. Rounding this perilous hole, or gulf, upon the aforesaid alluvious substances, which formed its shores, we reached the extremity of the cavern, which there ascends like a vent, or funnel, directly up a sloping precipice, but hideously black and slippery from wet and seaweeds. One of our sailors, a Zetlander, climbed up a good way, and by holding up a light, we could plainly perceive that this vent closed after ascending to a considerable height; and here, therefore, closed the adventure of the cave of Smowe, for it appeared utterly impossible to proceed further in any direction whatever. There is a tradition that the first Lord Reay went through various subterranean abysses, and at length returned, after ineffectually endeavouring to penetrate to the extremity of the Smowe cave; but this must be either fabulous, or an exaggerated account of such a journey as we performed. And under the latter supposition, it is a curious instance how little the people in the neighbourhood of this curiosity have cared to examine it.

'In returning, we endeavoured to familiarize ourselves with the objects in detail, which, viewed together, had struck us with so much wonder. The stalactites, or limy incrustations, upon the walls of the cavern, are chiefly of a dark-brown colour, and in this respect Smowe is inferior, according to Mr. Stevenson, to the celebrated cave of Macallister in the Isle of Skye. In returning, the men with the lights, and the various groups and attitudes of the party, gave a good deal of amusement. We now ventured to clamber along the side of the rock above the subterranean water, and thus gained the upper arch, and had the satisfaction to see our admirable and good-humoured commodore, Hamilton, floated beneath the lower arch into the second cavern. His goodly countenance being illumined by a single candle, his recumbent posture, and the appearance of a hard-favoured fellow guiding the boat, made him the very picture of Bibo, in the catch, when he wakes in Charon's boat :

> When Bibo thought fit from this world to retreat,
> As full of Champagne as an egg's full of meat,
> He waked in the boat, and to Charon he said,
> That he would be row'd back, for he was not yet dead.

'Descending from our superior station on the upper arch, we now again embarked, and spent some time in rowing about and examining this second cave. We could see our dusky entrance, into which daylight streamed faint, and at a considerable distance ; and under the arch of the outer cavern stood a sailor, with an oar in his hand, looking, in the perspective, like a fairy with his wand. We at length emerged unwillingly from this extraordinary basin, and again enjoyed ourselves in the large exterior cave. Our boat was hoisted with some difficulty over the ledge, which appears the natural barrier of the interior apartments, and restored in safety to the fishers, who were properly gratified for the hazard which their skiff, as well as one of themselves, had endured. After this we resolved to ascend the rocks, and discover the opening by which the cascade was discharged from above into the second cave. Erskine and I, by some chance, took the wrong side of the rocks, and, after some scrambling, got into the face of a dangerous precipice, where Erskine, to my great alarm, turned giddy, and declared he could not go farther. I clambered up without much difficulty, and shouting to the people below, got two of them to assist the Counsellor, who was brought into, by the means which have sent many a good fellow out of, the world—I mean a rope. We easily found the brook, and traced its descent till it precipitates itself down a chasm of the rock into the subterranean apartment, where we first made its acquaintance. Divided by a natural arch of stone from the chasm down which the cascade falls, there is another rent, which serves as a skylight to the cavern, as I already noticed. Standing on a natural foot-bridge, formed by the arch which divides these two gulfs, you have a grand prospect into both. The one is deep, black, and silent, only affording at the bottom a glimpse of the dark and sullen pool which occupies the interior of the cavern. The right-hand rent, down which the stream discharges itself, seems to ring and reel with the unceasing roar of the cataract which envelopes its side in mist and foam. This part of the scene alone is worth a day's journey. After heavy rains, the torrent is discharged into this cavern with astonishing violence; and the size of the chasm being inadequate to the reception of such a volume of water, it is thrown up in spouts like the blowing of a whale. But at such times the entrance of the cavern is inaccessible.

'Taking leave of this scene with regret, we rowed back to Loch Eribol. Having yet an hour to spare before dinner, we rowed across the mouth of the lake to its shore on the east side. This rises into a steep and shattered stack of mouldering calcareous rock and stone, called Whiten-head. It is pierced with several caverns, the abode of seals and cormorants. We entered one, where our guide promised to us a grand sight, and so it certainly would have been to any who had not just come from Smowe. In this last cave the sea enters through a lofty arch, and penetrates to a great depth; but the weight of the tide made it dangerous to venture very far, so we did not see the extremity of Friskin's Cavern, as it is called. We shot several cormorants in the cave, the echoes roaring like thunder at every discharge. We received, however, a proper rebuke from Hamilton, our commodore, for killing anything which was not fit for *eating*. It was in vain I assured him that the Zetlanders made excellent hare-soup out of these sea-fowl. He will listen to no subordinate authority, and rules us by the Almanach des Gourmands. Mr. Anderson showed me the spot where the Norwegian monarch, Haco, moored his fleet, after the discomfiture he received at Largs. He caused all the cattle to be driven from the hills, and houghed and slain upon a broad flat rock, for the refreshment of his dispirited army. Mr. Anderson dines with us, and very handsomely presents us with a stock of salmon, haddocks, and so forth, which we requite by a small present of wine from our sea stores. This has been a fine day; the first fair day here for these eight weeks.

'*20th August* 1814.—Sail by four in the morning, and by half-past six are off Cape Wrath. All hands ashore by seven, and no time allowed to breakfast, except on beef and biscuit. On this dread Cape, so fatal to mariners, it is proposed to build a lighthouse, and Mr. Stevenson has fixed on an advantageous situation. It is a high promontory, with steep sides that go sheer down to the breakers, which lash its feet. There is no landing, except in a small creek about a mile and a half to the eastward. There the foam of the sea plays at long bowls with a huge collection of large stones, some of them a ton in weight, but which these fearful billows chuck up and down as a child tosses a ball. The walk from thence to the Cape was over rough boggy ground, but good sheep pasture. Mr. —— Dunlop, brother to the laird of Dunlop, took from Lord Reay, some years since, a large track of sheep-land, including the territories of Cape Wrath, for about £300 a year, for the period of two-nineteen years and a life-rent. It is needless to say that the tenant has an immense profit, for the value of pasture is now understood here. Lord Reay's estate, containing

150,000 square acres, and measuring eighty miles by sixty, was, before commencement of the last leases, rented at £1200 a year. It is now worth £5000, and Mr. Anderson says he may let it this ensuing year (when the leases expire) for about £15,000. But then he must resolve to part with his people, for these rents can only be given upon the supposition that sheep are generally to be introduced on the property. In an economical, and perhaps in a political point of view, it might be best that every part of a country were dedicated to that sort of occupation for which nature has best fitted it. But to effect this reform in the present instance, Lord Reay must turn out several hundred families who have lived under him and his fathers for many generations, and the swords of whose fathers probably won the lands from which he is now expelling them. He is a good-natured man, I suppose, for Mr. A. says he is hesitating whether he shall not take a more moderate rise (£7000 or £8000), and keep his Highland tenantry. This last war (before the short peace), he levied a fine fencible corps (the Reay fencibles), and might have doubled their number. *Wealth* is no doubt *strength* in a country, while all is quiet and governed by law, but on any altercation or internal commotion, it ceases to be strength, and is only the means of tempting the strong to plunder the possessors. Much may be said on both sides.[1]

'Cape Wrath is a striking point, both from the dignity of its own appearance, and from the mental association of its being the extreme cape of Scotland, with reference to the north-west. There is no land in the direct line between this point and America. I saw a pair of large eagles, and if I had had the rifle-gun might have had a shot, for the birds, when I first saw them, were perched on a rock within about sixty or seventy yards. They are, I suppose, little disturbed here, for they showed no great alarm. After the Commissioners and Mr. Stevenson had examined the headland, with reference to the site of a lighthouse, we strolled to our boat, and came on board between ten and eleven. Get the boat up upon deck, and set sail for the Lewis with light winds and a great swell of tide. Pass a rocky islet called Gousla. Here a fine vessel was lately wrecked; all her crew perished but one, who got upon the rocks from the boltsprit, and was afterwards brought off. In front of Cape Wrath are some angry breakers, called the *Staggs;* the rocks which occasion them are visible at low water. The country behind Cape Wrath swells in high sweeping elevations, but without any picturesque or dignified mountainous scenery. But on sailing westward a few miles, particularly after doubling a headland called the Stour of Assint, the coast assumes the true Highland character, being skirted with a succession of picturesque mountains of every variety of height and outline. These are the hills of Ross-shire—a waste and thinly-peopled district at this extremity of the island. We would willingly have learned the names of the most remarkable, but they are only laid down in the charts by the cant names given them by mariners, from their appearance, as the Sugar-loaf, and so forth. Our breeze now increases, and seems steadily favourable, carrying us on with exhilarating rapidity, at the rate of eight knots an hour, with the romantic outline of the mainland under our lee-beam, and the dusky shores of the Long Island beginning to appear ahead. We remain on deck long after it is dark, watching the phosphoric effects occasioned, or made visible, by the rapid motion of the vessel, and enlightening her course with a continued succession of sparks and even flashes of broad light, mingled with the foam which she flings from her bows and head. A rizard haddock and to bed. Charming weather all day.

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[1] The whole of the immense district called *Lord Reay's country*—the habitation, as far back as history reaches, of the clan Mackay—has passed, since Sir W. Scott's journal was written, into the hands of the noble family of Sutherland.

'*21st August* 1814.—Last night went out like a lamb, but this morning came in like a lion, all roar and tumult. The wind shifted and became squally; the mingled and confused tides that run among the Hebrides got us among their eddies, and gave the cutter such concussions, that, besides reeling at every wave, she trembled from head to stern, with a sort of very uncomfortable and ominous vibration. Turned out about three, and went on deck; the prospect dreary enough, as we are beating up a narrow channel between two dark and disconsolate-looking islands, in a gale of wind and rain, guided only by the twinkling glimmer of the light on an island called Ellan Glas.—Go to bed and sleep soundly, notwithstanding the rough rocking. Great bustle about four; the light-keeper having seen our flag, comes off to be our pilot, as in duty bound. Asleep again till eight. When I went on deck, I found we had anchored in the little harbour of Scalpa, upon the coast of Harris, a place dignified by the residence of Charles Edward in his hazardous attempt to escape in 1746. An old man, lately alive here, called Donald Macleod, was his host and temporary protector, and could not, until his dying hour, mention the distresses of the adventurer without tears. From this place, Charles attempted to go to Stornoway; but the people of the Lewis had taken arms to secure him, under an idea that he was coming to plunder the country. And although his faithful attendant, Donald Macleod, induced them by fair words to lay aside their purpose, yet they insisted upon his leaving the island. So the unfortunate Prince was obliged to return back to Scalpa. He afterwards escaped to South Uist, but was chased in the passage by Captain Fergusson's sloop of war. The harbour seems a little neat secure place of anchorage. Within a small island, there seems more shelter than where we are lying; but it is crowded with vessels, part of those whom we saw in the Long-Hope—so Mr. Wilson chose to remain outside. The ground looks hilly and barren in the extreme; but I can say little for it, as an incessant rain prevents my keeping the deck. Stevenson and Duff, accompanied by Marchie, go to examine the lighthouse on Ellan Glas. Hamilton and Erskine keep their beds, having scarce slept last night—and I bring up my journal. The day continues bad, with little intermission of rain.

Our party return with little advantage from their expedition, excepting some fresh butter from the lighthouse. The harbour of Scalpa is composed of a great number of little uninhabited islets. The masts of the vessels at anchor behind them have a good effect. To bed early, to make amends for last night, with the purpose of sailing for Dunvegan in the Isle of Skye with daylight.'

CHAPTER XXXI

Diary continued—Isle of Harris—Monuments of the Chiefs of Macleod—Isle of Skye—Dunvegan Castle—Loch Corriskin—Macallister's Cave.

1814

'*22nd August* 1814.—Sailed early in the morning from Scalpa Harbour, in order to cross the Minch, or Channel, for Dunvegan; but the breeze being contrary, we can only creep along the Harris shore, until we shall gain the advantage of the tide. The east coast of Harris, as we now see it, is of a character which sets human industry at utter defiance, consisting of high sterile hills, covered entirely with stones, with a very slight sprinkling of stunted heather. Within, appear still higher peaks of mountains. I have never seen anything more unpropitious, excepting the southern side of Griban, on the shores of Loch-na-Gaoil, in the Isle of Mull. We sail along this desolate coast (which exhibits no mark of human habitation) with the advantage of a pleasant day, and a brisk though not a favourable gale. *Two o'clock*—Row ashore to see the little harbour and village of Rowdill, on the coast of Harris. There is a decent three-storied house, belonging to the laird, Mr. Macleod of the Harris,[1] where we were told two of his female relations lived. A large vessel had been stranded last year, and two or three carpenters were about repairing her, but in such a style of

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[1] The Harris has recently passed into the possession of the Earl of Dunmore.—[1839.]

Highland laziness that I suppose she may float next century. The harbour is neat enough, but wants a little more cover to the eastward. The ground, on landing, does not seem altogether so desolate as from the sea. In the former point of view, we overlook all the retired glens and crevices, which, by infinite address and labour, are rendered capable of a little cultivation. But few and evil are the patches so cultivated in Harris, as far as we have seen. Above the house is situated the ancient church of Rowdill. This pile was unfortunately burned down by accident some years since, by fire taking to a quantity of wood laid in for fitting it up. It is a building in the form of a cross, with a rude tower at the eastern end, like some old English churches. Upon this tower are certain pieces of sculpture, of a kind the last which one would have expected on a building dedicated to religious purposes. Some have lately fallen in a storm, but enough remains to astonish us at the grossness of the architect and the age.

'Within the church are two ancient monuments. The first, on the right hand of the pulpit, presents the effigy of a warrior completely armed in plate armour, with his hand on his two-handed broadsword. His helmet is peaked, with a gorget or upper corslet which seems to be made of mail. His figure lies flat on the monument, and is in bas-relief, of the natural size. The arch which surmounts this monument is curiously carved with the figures of the apostles. In the flat space of the wall beneath the arch, and above the tombstone, are a variety of compartments, exhibiting the arms of the Macleods, being a galley with the sails spread, a rude view of Dunvegan Castle, some saints and religious emblems, and a Latin inscription, of which our time (or skill) was inadequate to decipher the first line; but the others announced the tenant of the monument to be *Alexander*, *filius Willielmi MacLeod*, *de Dunvegan*, *Anno Dni* M.CCCC.XXVIII. A much older monument (said also to represent a Laird of Macleod) lies in the transept, but without any arch over it. It represents the grim figure of a Highland chief, not in feudal armour like the former, but dressed in a plaid—(or perhaps a shirt of mail)—reaching down below the knees, with a broad sort of hem upon its lower extremity. The figure wears a high-peaked open helmet, or skull-cap, with a sort of tippet of mail attached to it, which falls over the breast of the warrior, pretty much as women wear a handkerchief or short shawl. This remarkable figure is bearded most tyrannically, and has one hand on his long two-handed sword, the other on his dirk, both of which hang at a broad belt. Another weapon, probably his knife, seems to have been also attached to the baldric. His feet rest on his two dogs entwined together, and a similar emblem is said to have supported his head, but is now defaced, as indeed the whole monument bears marks of the unfortunate fire. A lion is placed at each end of the stone. Who the hero was, whom this martial monument commemorated, we could not learn. Indeed, our Cicerone was but imperfect. He chanced to be a poor devil of an excise-officer who had lately made a seizure of a still upon a neighbouring island, after a desperate resistance. Upon seeing our cutter, he mistook it, as has often happened to us, for an armed vessel belonging to the revenue, which the appearance and equipment of the yacht, and the number of men, make her resemble considerably. He was much disappointed when he found we had nothing to do with the tribute to Cæsar, and begged us not to undeceive the natives, who were so much irritated against him that he found it necessary to wear a loaded pair of pistols in each pocket, which he showed to our Master, Wilson, to convince him of the perilous state in which he found himself while exercising so obnoxious a duty in the midst of a fierce-tempered people, and at many miles distance from any possible countenance or assistance. The village of Rowdill consists of Highland huts of the common construction, *i.e.* a low circular wall of large stones, without mortar, deeply sunk in the ground, surmounted by a thatched roof secured by ropes, without any chimney but a hole in the roof. There may be forty such houses in the village. We heard that the laird was procuring a schoolmaster—he of the parish being ten miles distant—and there was a neatness about the large house which seems to indicate that things are going on well. Adjacent to the churchyard were two eminences, apparently artificial. Upon one was fixed a stone, seemingly the staff of a cross; upon another the head of a cross, with a sculpture of the crucifixion. These monuments (which refer themselves to Catholic times of course) are popularly called *The Croshlets*—crosslets, or little crosses.

'Get on board at five, and stand across the Sound for Skye with the ebb-tide in our favour. The sunset being delightful, we enjoy it upon deck, admiring the Sound on each side bounded by islands. That of Skye lies in the east, with some very high mountains in the centre, and a bold rocky coast in front, opening up into several lochs, or arms of the sea;—that of Loch Folliart, near the upper end of which Dunvegan is situated, is opposite to us, but our breeze has failed us, and the flood-tide will soon set in, which is likely to carry us to the northward of this object of our curiosity until next morning. To the west of us lies Harris, with its variegated ridges of mountains, now clear, distinct, and free from clouds. The sun is just setting behind the Island of Bernera, of which we see one conical hill. North Uist and Benbecula continue from Harris to the southerly line of what is called the Long Island. They are as bold and mountainous, and probably as barren as Harris—worse they cannot be. Unnumbered islets and holms, each of which has its name and its history, skirt these larger isles, and are visible in this clear evening as distinct and separate objects, lying lone and quiet upon the face of the undisturbed and scarce-rippling sea. To our berths at ten, after admiring the scenery for some time.

'*23rd August* 1814.—Wake under the Castle of Dunvegan, in the Loch of Folliart. I had sent a card to the Laird of Macleod in the morning, who came off before we were dressed, and carried us to his castle to breakfast. A part of Dunvegan is very old; "its birth tradition notes not." Another large tower was built by the same

Alaster Macleod whose burial-place and monument we saw yesterday at Rowdill. He had a Gaelic surname, signifying the Hump-backed. Roderick More (knighted by James VI.) erected a long edifice combining these two ancient towers: and other pieces of building, forming a square, were accomplished at different times. The whole castle occupies a precipitous mass of rock overhanging the lake, divided by two or three islands in that place, which form a snug little harbour under the walls. There is a courtyard looking out upon the sea, protected by a battery, at least a succession of embrasures, for only two guns are pointed, and these unfit for service. The ancient entrance rose up a flight of steps cut in the rock, and passed into this courtyard through a portal, but this is now demolished. You land under the castle, and walking round, find yourself in front of it. This was originally inaccessible, for a brook coming down on the one side, a chasm of the rocks on the other, and a ditch in front, made it impervious. But the late Macleod built a bridge over the stream, and the present laird is executing an entrance suitable to the character of this remarkable fortalice, by making a portal between two advanced towers and an outer court, from which he proposes to throw a drawbridge over to the high rock in front of the castle. This, if well executed, cannot fail to have a good and characteristic effect. We were most kindly and hospitably received by the chieftain, his lady, and his sister;[1] the two last are pretty and accomplished young women, a sort of persons whom we have not seen for some time; and I was quite as much pleased with renewing my acquaintance with them as with the sight of a good field of barley just cut (the first harvest we have seen), not to mention an extensive young plantation and some middle-aged trees, though all had been strangers to mine eyes since I left Leith. In the garden—or rather the orchard which was formerly the garden—is a pretty cascade, divided into two branches, and called Rorie More's Nurse, because he loved to be lulled to sleep by the sound of it. The day was rainy, or at least inconstant, so we could not walk far from the castle. Besides the assistance of the laird himself, who was most politely and easily attentive, we had that of an intelligent gentlemanlike clergyman, Mr. Suter, minister of Kilmore, to explain the *carte-de-pays*. Within the castle we saw a remarkable drinking-cup, with an inscription dated A.D. 993, which I have described particularly elsewhere.[1] I saw also a fairy flag, a pennon of silk, with something like round red rowan-berries wrought upon it. We also saw the drinking-horn of Rorie More, holding about three pints English measure—an ox's horn tipped with silver, not nearly so large as Watt of Harden's bugle. The rest of the curiosities in the castle are chiefly Indian, excepting an old dirk and the fragment of a two-handed sword. We learn that most of the Highland superstitions, even that of the second-sight, are still in force. Gruagach, a sort of tutelary divinity, often mentioned by Martin in his history of the Western Islands, has still his place and credit, but is modernized into a tall man, always a Lowlander, with a long coat and white waistcoat. Passed a very pleasant day. I should have said the fairy-flag had three properties. Produced in battle, it multiplied the numbers of the Macleods—spread on the nuptial bed, it ensured fertility—and lastly, it brought herring into the loch.[2]

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[1] Miss Macleod, now Mrs. Spencer Perceval.

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[1] See Note, Lord of the Isles, Scott's Poetical Works, vol. x. p. 294.

[2] The following passage, from the last of Scott's Letters on Demonology (written in 1830), refers to the night of this 23rd of August 1814. He mentions that twice in his life he had experienced the sensation which the Scotch call *eerie;* gives a night-piece of his early youth in the castle of Glammis, which has already been quoted (*ante*, vol. i. p. 186), and proceeds thus:—'Amid such tales of ancient tradition, I had from Macleod and his lady the courteous offer of the haunted apartment of the castle, about which, as a stranger, I might be supposed interested. Accordingly I took possession of it about the witching hour. Except, perhaps, some tapestry hangings, and the extreme thickness of the walls, which argued great antiquity, nothing could have been more comfortable than the interior of the apartment; but if you looked from the windows, the view was such as to correspond with the highest tone of superstition. An autumnal blast, sometimes clear, sometimes driving mist before it, swept along the troubled billows of the lake, which it occasionally concealed, and by fits disclosed.

'*24th August* 1814.—This morning resist with difficulty Macleod's kind and pressing entreaty to send round the ship, and go to the cave at Airds by land; but our party is too large to be accommodated without inconvenience, and divisions are always awkward. Walk and see Macleod's farm. The plantations seem to thrive admirably, although I think he hazards planting his trees greatly too tall. Macleod is a spirited and judicious improver, and if he does not hurry too fast, cannot fail to be of service to his people. He seems to think and act much like a chief, without the fanfaronade of the character. See a female school patronised by Mrs. M. There are about twenty girls, who learn reading, writing, and spinning; and being compelled to observe habits of cleanliness and neatness when at school, will probably be the means of introducing them by degrees at home. The roads around the castle are, generally speaking, very good; some are old, some made under the operation of the late act. Macleod says almost all the contractors for these last roads have failed, being tightly looked after by Government, which I confess I think very right. If Government is to give relief where

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The waves rushed in wild disorder on the shore, and covered with foam the steep pile of rocks, which, rising from the sea in forms something resembling the human figure, have obtained the name of Macleod's Maidens, and, in such a night, seemed no bad representative of the Norwegian goddesses, called Choosers of the Slain, or Riders of the Storm. There was something of the dignity of danger in the scene; for, on a platform beneath the windows, lay an ancient battery of cannon, which had sometimes been used against privateers even of late years. The distant scene was a view of that part of the Quillen mountains which are called, from their form, Macleod's Dining-Tables. The voice of an angry cascade, termed the Nurse of Rorie Mhor, because that chief slept best in its vicinity, was heard from time to time mingling its notes with those of wind and wave. Such was the haunted room at Dunvegan; and, as such, it well deserved a less sleepy inhabitant. In the language of Dr. Johnson, who has stamped his memory on this remote place,—"I looked around me, and wondered that I was not more affected; but the mind is not at all times equally ready to be moved." In a word, it is necessary to confess that, of all I heard or saw, the most engaging spectacle was the comfortable bed in which I hoped to make amends for some rough nights on shipboard, and where I slept accordingly without thinking of ghost or goblin, till I was called by my servant in the morning.'

a disadvantageous contract has been engaged in, it is plain it cannot be refused in similar instances, so that all calculations of expenses in such operations are at an end. The day being delightfully fair and warm, we walk up to the Church of Kilmore. In a cottage, at no great distance, we heard the women singing as they *waulked* the cloth, by rubbing it with their hands and feet, and screaming all the while in a sort of chorus. At a distance, the sound was wild and sweet enough, but rather discordant when you approached too near the performers. In the churchyard (otherwise not remarkable) was a pyramidical monument erected to the father of the celebrated Simon, Lord Lovat, who was fostered at Dunvegan. It is now nearly ruinous, and the inscription has fallen down. Return to the castle, take our luncheon, and go aboard at three—Macleod accompanying us in proper style with his piper. We take leave of the castle, where we have been so kindly entertained, with a salute of seven guns. The chief returns ashore, with his piper playing "the Macleod's gathering," heard to advantage along the calm and placid loch, and dying as it retreated from us.

'The towers of Dunvegan, with the banner which floated over them in honour of their guests, now showed to great advantage. On the right were a succession of three remarkable hills, with round flat tops, popularly called Macleod's Dining-Tables. Far behind these, in the interior of the island, arise the much higher and more romantic mountains called Quillen, or Cuillin, a name which they have been said to owe to no less a person than Cuthullin, or Cuchullin, celebrated by Ossian. I ought, I believe, to notice that Macleod and Mr. Suter have both heard a tacksman of Macleod's, called Grant, recite the celebrated Address to the Sun; and another person, whom they named, repeat the description of Cuchullin's car. But all agree as to the gross infidelity of Macpherson as a translator and editor. It ends in the explanation of the Adventures in the cave of Montesinos, afforded to the Knight of La Mancha, by the ape of Gines de Passamonte—some are true and some are false.

There is little poetical tradition in this country, yet there should be a great deal, considering how lately the bards and genealogists existed as a distinct order. Macleod's *hereditary* piper is called MacCrimmon, but the present holder of the office has risen above his profession. He is an old man, a lieutenant in the army, and a most capital piper, possessing about 200 tunes and pibrochs, most of which will probably die with him, as he declines to have any of his sons instructed in his art. He plays to Macleod and his lady, but only in the same room, and maintains his minstrel privilege by putting on his bonnet so soon as he begins to play. These MacCrimmons formerly kept a college in Skye for teaching the pipe-music. Macleod's present piper is of the name, but scarcely as yet a deacon of his craft. He played every day at dinner.—After losing sight of the Castle of Dunvegan, we open another branch of the loch on which it is situated, and see a small village upon its distant bank. The mountains of Quillen continue to form a background to the wild landscape with their variegated and peaked outline. We approach Dunvegan-head, a bold bluff cape, where the loch joins the ocean. The weather, hitherto so beautiful that we had dined on deck *en seigneurs*, becomes overcast and hazy, with little or no wind. Laugh and lie down.

'25*th August* 1814.—Rise about eight o'clock, the yacht gliding delightfully along the coast of Skye with a fair wind and excellent day. On the opposite side lie the islands of Canna, Rum, and Muick, popularly Muck. On opening the sound between Rum and Canna, see a steep circular rock, forming one side of the harbour, on the point of which we can discern the remains of a tower of small dimensions, built, it is said, by a King of the Isles to secure a wife of whom he was jealous. But, as we kept the Skye side of the Sound, we saw little of these islands but what our spy-glasses could show us. The coast of Skye is highly romantic, and at the same time displayed a richness of vegetation on the lower grounds, to which we have hitherto been strangers. We passed three salt-water lochs, or deep embayments, called Loch Bracadale, Loch Eynort, and Loch Britta—and about eleven o'clock open Loch Scavig. We were now under the western termination of the high mountains of Quillen, whose weather-beaten and serrated peaks we had admired at a distance from Dunvegan. They sunk here upon the sea, but with the same bold and peremptory aspect which their distant appearance indicated. They seemed to consist of precipitous sheets of naked rock, down which the torrents were leaping in a hundred lines of foam. The tops, apparently inaccessible to human foot, were rent and split into the most tremendous pinnacles; towards the base of these bare and precipitous crags, the ground, enriched by the soil washed away from them, is verdant and productive. Having passed within the small isle of Soa, we enter Loch Scavig under the shoulder of one of these grisly mountains, and observe that the opposite side of the loch is of a milder character softened down into steep green declivities. From the depth of the bay advanced a headland of high rocks which divided the lake into two recesses, from each of which a brook seemed to issue. Here Macleod had intimated we should find a fine romantic loch, but we were uncertain up what inlet we should proceed in search of it. We chose, against our better judgment, the southerly inlet, where we saw a house which might afford us information. On manning our boat and rowing ashore, we observed a hurry among the inhabitants, owing to our being as usual suspected for *king's men*, although, Heaven knows, we have nothing to do with the revenue but to spend the part of it corresponding to our equipment. We find that there is a lake adjoining to each branch of the bay, and foolishly walk a couple of miles to see that next the farmhouse, merely because the honest man seemed jealous of the honour of his own loch, though we were speedily convinced it was not that which we had been recommended to examine. It had no peculiar merit excepting from its neighbourhood to a very high cliff or mountain of precipitous granite; otherwise, the sheet of water does not equal even Cauldshiels Loch. Returned and re-embarked in our boat, for our guide shook his head at our proposal to climb over the peninsula which divides the two bays and the two lakes. In rowing round the headland, surprised at the infinite number of sea-fowl, then busy apparently with a shoal of fish; at the depth of the bay, find that the discharge from this second lake forms a sort of waterfall or rather rapid; round this place were assembled hundreds of trouts and salmon struggling to get up into the fresh water; with a net we might have had twenty salmon at a haul, and a sailor, with no better hook than a crooked pin, caught a dish of trouts during our absence.

'Advancing up this huddling and riotous brook, we found ourselves in a most extraordinary scene: we were surrounded by hills of the boldest and most precipitous character, and on the margin of a lake which seemed to have sustained the constant ravages of torrents from these rude neighbours. The shores consisted of huge layers of naked granite, here and there intermixed with bogs, and heaps of gravel and sand marking the course of torrents. Vegetation there was little or none, and the mountains rose so perpendicularly from the water's edge, that Borrowdale is a jest to them. We proceeded about one mile and a half up this deep, dark, and solitary lake, which is about two miles long, half a mile broad, and, as we learned, of extreme depth. The vapour which enveloped the mountain ridges obliged us by assuming a thousand shapes, varying its veils in all sorts of forms, but sometimes clearing off altogether. It is true it made us pay the penalty by some heavy and downright showers, from the frequency of which, a Highland boy, whom we brought from the farm, told us the lake was popularly called the Water Kettle. The proper name is Loch Corriskin, from the deep *corrie* or hollow in the mountains of Cuillin, which affords the basin for this wonderful sheet of water. It is as exquisite as a savage scene, as Loch Katrine is as a scene of stern beauty. After having penetrated so far as distinctly to observe the termination of the lake, under an immense mountain which rises abruptly from the head of the waters, we returned, and often stopped to admire the ravages which storms must have made in these recesses when all human witnesses were driven to places of more shelter and security. Stones, or rather large massive fragments of rock of a composite kind, perfectly different from the granite barriers of the lake, lay upon the rocky beach in the strangest and most precarious situations, as if abandoned by the torrents which had borne them down from above; some lay loose and tottering upon the ledges of the natural rock, with so little security that the slightest push moved them, though their weight exceeded many tons. These detached rocks were chiefly what are called plum-pudding stones. Those which formed the shore were granite. The opposite side of the lake seemed quite pathless, as a huge mountain, one of the detached ridges of the Quillen, sinks in a profound and almost perpendicular precipice down to the water. On the left-hand side, which we traversed, rose a higher and equally inaccessible mountain, the top of which seemed to contain the crater of an exhausted volcano. I never saw a spot on which there was less appearance of vegetation of any kind; the eye rested on nothing but brown and naked crags,[1] and the rocks on which we walked by the side of the loch were as bare as the pavement of Cheapside. There are one or two spots of islets in the loch which seem to bear juniper, or some such low bushy shrub.

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[1] Rarely human eye has known
A scene so stern as that dread lake,
With its dark ledge of barren stone.
Seems that primeval earthquake's sway
Hath rent a strange and shatter'd way
Through the rude bosom of the hill,
And that each naked precipice,
Sable ravine, and dark abyss,
Tells of the outrage still.
The wildest glen, but this, can show
Some touch of Nature's genial glow;
On high Benmore green mosses grow,
And heath-bells bud in deep Glencroe,
And copse on Cruchan-Ben;
But here—above, around, below,
On mountain or in glen,

'Returned from our extraordinary walk and went on board. During dinner, our vessel quitted Loch Scavig, and having doubled its southern cape, opened the bay or salt-water Loch of Sleapin. There went again on shore to visit the late discovered and much celebrated cavern called Macallister's Cave. It opens at the end of a deep ravine running upward from the sea, and the proprietor, Mr. Macallister of Strath Aird, finding that visitors injured it, by breaking and carrying away the stalactites with which it abounds, has secured this cavern by an eight or nine feet wall, with a door. Upon enquiring for the key, we found it was three miles up the loch at the laird's house. It was now late, and to stay until a messenger had gone and returned three miles was not to be thought of, any more than the alternative of going up the loch and lying there all night. We therefore, with regret, resolved to scale the wall, in which attempt, by the assistance of a rope and some ancient acquaintance with orchard breaking, we easily succeeded. The first entrance to this celebrated cave is rude and unpromising, but the light of the torches with which we were provided is soon reflected from roof, floor, and walls, which seem as if they were sheeted with marble, partly smooth, partly rough with frost-work and rustic ornaments, and partly wrought into statuary. The floor forms a steep and difficult ascent, and might be fancifully compared to a sheet of water, which, while it rushed whitening and foaming

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Nor tree, nor shrub, nor plant, nor flower,
Nor aught of vegetative power,
    The weary eye may ken;
For all is rocks at random thrown,
Black waves, bare crags, and banks of stone,
    As if were here denied
The summer's sun, the spring's sweet dew,
That clothe with many a varied hue
    The bleakest mountain-side.
Lord of the Isles, III. 14.

down a declivity, had been suddenly arrested and consolidated by the spell of an enchanter. Upon attaining the summit of this ascent, the cave descends with equal rapidity to the brink of a pool of the most limpid water, about four or five yards broad. There opens beyond this pool a portal arch, with beautiful white chasing upon the sides, which promises a continuation of the cave. One of our sailors swam across, for there was no other mode of passing, and informed us (as indeed we partly saw by the light he carried) that the enchantment of Macallister's cave terminated with this portal, beyond which there was only a rude ordinary cavern speedily choked with stones and earth. But the pool, on the brink of which we stood, surrounded by the most fanciful mouldings in a substance resembling white marble, and distinguished by the depth and purity of its waters, might be the bathing grotto of a Naiad. I think a statuary might catch beautiful hints from the fanciful and romantic disposition of the stalactites. There is scarce a form or group that an active fancy may not trace among the grotesque ornaments which have been gradually moulded in this cavern by the dropping of the calcareous water, and its hardening into petrifactions; many of these have been destroyed by the senseless rage of appropriation among recent tourists, and the grotto has lost (I am informed), through the smoke of torches, much of that vivid silver tint which was originally one of its chief distinctions. But enough of beauty remains to compensate for all that may be lost. As the easiest mode of return, I slid down the polished sheet of marble which forms the rising ascent, and thereby injured my pantaloons in a way which my jacket is ill calculated to conceal. Our wearables, after a month's hard service, begin to be frail, and there are daily demands for repairs. Our eatables also begin to assume a real nautical appearance—no soft bread—milk a rare commodity—and those gentlemen most in favour with John Peters, the steward, who prefer salt beef to fresh. To make amends, we never hear of sea-sickness, and the good-humour and harmony of the party continue uninterrupted. When we left the cave we carried off two grandsons of Mr. Macallister's, remarkably fine boys; and Erskine, who may be called *L'ami des enfans*, treated them most kindly, and showed them all the curiosities in the vessel, causing even the guns to be fired for their amusement, besides filling their pockets with almonds and raisins. So that, with a handsome letter of apology, I hope we may erase any evil impression Mr. Macallister may adopt from our storming the exterior defences of his cavern. After having sent them ashore in safety, stand out of the bay with little or no wind, for the opposite island of Egg.'

CHAPTER XXXII

Diary continued—Cave of Egg—Iona—Staffa—Dunstaffnage—Dunluce Castle—Giant's Causeway—Isle of Arran, etc.—Diary concluded.

AUGUST—SEPTEMBER 1814

'*26th August* 1814.—At seven this morning were in the Sound which divides the Isle of Rum from that of Egg. Rum is rude, barren, and mountainous; Egg, although hilly and rocky, and traversed by one remarkable ridge called Scuir-Egg, has, in point of soil, a much more promising appearance. Southward of both lies Muick, or Muck, a low and fertile island, and though the least, yet probably the most valuable of the three. Caverns being still the order of the day, we man the boat and row along the shore of Egg, in quest of that which was the memorable scene of a horrid feudal vengeance. We had rounded more than half the island, admiring the entrance of many a bold natural cave which its rocks exhibit, but without finding that which we sought, until we procured a guide. This noted cave has a very narrow entrance, through which one can hardly creep on knees and hands. It rises steep and lofty within, and runs into the bowels of the rock to the depth of 255 measured feet. The height at the entrance may be about three feet, but rises to eighteen or twenty, and the breadth may vary in the same proportion. The rude and stony bottom of this cave is strewed with the bones of men, women, and children, being the sad relics of the ancient inhabitants of the island, 200 in number, who were slain on the following occasion :—The Macdonalds of the Isle of Egg, a people dependent on Clanranald, had done some injury to the Laird of Macleod. The tradition of the isle says that it was by a personal attack on the chieftain, in which his back was broken ; but that of the other isles bears that the injury was offered to two or three of the Macleods, who, landing upon Egg and using some freedom with the young women, were seized by the islanders, bound hand and foot, and turned adrift in a boat, which the winds and waves safely conducted to Skye. To avenge the offence given, Macleod sailed with such a body of men as rendered resistance hopeless. The natives, fearing his vengeance, concealed themselves in this cavern, and after strict search, the Macleods went on board their galleys, after doing what mischief they could, concluding the inhabitants had left the isle. But next morning they espied from their vessel a man upon the island, and, immediately landing again, they traced his retreat, by means of a light snow on the ground, to this cavern. Macleod then summoned the subterraneous garrison, and demanded that the individuals who had offended him should be delivered up. This was peremptorily refused. The chieftain thereupon caused his people to divert the course of a rill of water, which, falling over the mouth of the cave, would have prevented his purposed vengeance. He then kindled at the entrance of the cavern a huge fire, and maintained it until all within were destroyed by suffocation. The date of this dreadful deed must have been recent, if one can judge from the fresh appearance of those relics. I brought off, in spite of the prejudices of our sailors, a skull, which seems that of a young woman.

'Before re-embarking, we visit another cave opening to the sea, but of a character widely different, being a large open vault as high as that of a cathedral, and running back a great way into the rock at the same height ; the height and width of the opening give light to the whole. Here, after 1745, when the Catholic priests were scarcely tolerated, the priest of Egg used to perform the Romish service. A huge ledge of rock, almost half-way up one side of the vault, served for altar and pulpit; and the appearance of a priest and Highland congregation in such an extraordinary place of worship might have engaged the pencil of Salvator. Most of the inhabitants of Egg are still Catholics, and laugh at their neighbours of Rum, who, having been converted by the cane of their chieftain, are called *Protestants of the yellow stick*. The Presbyterian minister and Catholic priest live upon this little island on very good terms. The people here were much irritated against the men of a revenue vessel who had seized all the stills, etc., in the neighbouring Isle of Muck, with so much severity as to take even the people's bedding. We had been mistaken for some time for this obnoxious vessel. Got on board about two o'clock, and agreed to stand over for Coll, and to be ruled by the wind as to what was next to be done. Bring up my journal.

'*27th August* 1814.—The wind, to which we resigned ourselves, proves exceedingly tyrannical, and blows squally the whole night, which, with the swell of the Atlantic, now unbroken by any islands to windward, proves a means of great combustion in the cabin. The dishes and glasses in the steward's cupboards become locomotive—portmanteaus and writing-desks are more active than necessary—it is scarce possible to keep one's self within bed, and impossible to stand upright if you rise. Having crept upon deck about four in the morning, I find we are beating to windward off the Isle of Tyree, with the determination on the part of Mr. Stevenson that his constituents should visit a reef of rocks called *Skerry Vhor*, where he thought it would be essential to have a lighthouse. Loud remonstrances on the part of the Commissioners, who one and all declare they will subscribe to his opinion, whatever it may be, rather than continue this infernal buffeting. Quiet perseverance on the part of Mr. S., and great kicking, bouncing, and squabbling upon that of the Yacht, who seems to like the idea of Skerry Vhor as little as the Commissioners. At length, by dint of exertion, come in sight of this long ridge of rocks (chiefly under water), on which the tide breaks in a most tremendous style. There appear a few low broad rocks at one end of the reef, which is about a mile in length. These are never entirely under water, though the surf dashes over them. To go through all the forms, Hamilton, Duff, and I resolve to land upon these bare rocks in company with Mr. Stevenson. Pull through a very heavy swell with great difficulty, and approach a tremendous surf dashing over black pointed rocks. Our rowers, however, get the boat into a quiet creek between two rocks, where we contrive to land well wetted. I saw nothing remarkable in my way, excepting several seals, which we might have shot, but, in the doubtful circumstances of the landing, we did not care to bring guns. We took possession of the rock in name of the Commissioners, and generously bestowed our own great names on its crags and creeks. The rock was carefully measured by Mr. S. It will be a most desolate position for a lighthouse—the Bell Rock and Eddystone a joke to it, for the nearest land is the wild island of Tyree, at fourteen miles' distance. So much for the Skerry Vhor.

'Came on board proud of our achievement; and, to the great delight of all parties, put the ship before the wind, and run swimmingly down for Iona. See a large square-rigged vessel, supposed an American. Reach Iona about five o'clock. The inhabitants of the isle of Columba, understanding their interest as well as if they had been Deal boatmen, charged two guineas for pilotage, which Captain W. abridged into fifteen shillings, too much for ten minutes' work. We soon got on shore, and landed in the bay of Martyrs, beautiful for its white sandy beach. Here all dead bodies are still landed, and laid for a time upon a small rocky eminence, called the Sweyne, before they are interred. Iona, the last time I saw it, seemed to me to contain the most wretched people I had anywhere seen. But either they have got better since I was here, or my eyes, familiarized with the wretchedness of Zetland and the Harris, are less shocked with that of Iona. Certainly their houses are better than either, and the appearance of the people not worse. This little fertile isle contains upwards of 400 inhabitants, all living upon small farms, which they divide and subdivide as their families increase, so that the country is greatly over-peopled, and in some danger of a famine in case of a year of scarcity. Visit the nunnery and Reilig Oran, or burial-place of St. Oran, but the night coming on we return on board.

'28*th August* 1814.—Carry our breakfast ashore—take that repast in the house of Mr. Maclean, the schoolmaster and cicerone of the island—and resume our investigation of the ruins of the cathedral and the cemetery. Of these monuments, more than of any other, it may be said with propriety,

> You never tread upon them but you set
> Your feet upon some ancient history.

I do not mean to attempt a description of what is so well known as the ruins of Iona. Yet I think it has been as yet inadequately performed, for the vast number of carved tombs containing the reliques of the great, exceeds credibility. In general, even in the most noble churches, the number of the vulgar dead exceed in all proportion the few of eminence who are deposited under monuments. Iona is in all respects the reverse; until lately the inhabitants of the isle did not presume to mix their vulgar dust with that of chiefs, reguli, and abbots. The number, therefore, of carved and inscribed tombstones is quite marvellous, and I can easily credit the story told by Sacheverell, who assures us that 300 inscriptions had been collected, and were lost in the troubles of the 17th century. Even now, many more might be deciphered than have yet been made public, but the rustic step of the peasants and of Sassenach visitants is fast destroying these faint memorials of the valiant of the isles. A skilful antiquary remaining here a week, and having (or assuming) the power of raising the half-sunk monuments, might make a curious collection. We could only gaze and grieve; yet had the day not been Sunday, we would have brought our seamen ashore, and endeavoured to have raised some of these monuments. The celebrated ridges called *Jomaire na'n Righrean*, or Graves of the Kings, can now scarce be said to exist, though their site is still pointed out. Undoubtedly, the thirst of spoil, and the frequent custom of burying treasures with the ancient princes, occasioned their early violation; nor am I any sturdy believer in their being regularly ticketed off by inscriptions into the tombs of the Kings of Scotland, of Ireland, of Norway, and so forth. If such inscriptions ever existed, I should deem them the work of some crafty bishop or abbot, for the credit of his diocese or convent. Macbeth is said to have been the last King of Scotland here buried; sixty preceded him, all doubtless as powerful in their day, but now unknown—*carent quia vate sacro.* A few weeks' labour of Shakspeare, an obscure player, has done more for the memory of Macbeth than all the gifts, wealth, and monuments of this cemetery of princes have been able to secure to the rest of its inhabitants. It also occurred to me in Iona (as it has on many similar occasions) that the traditional recollections concerning the monks themselves are wonderfully faint, contrasted with the beautiful and interesting monuments of architecture which they have left behind them. In Scotland particularly, the people have frequently traditions wonderfully vivid of the persons and achievements of ancient warriors, whose towers have long been levelled with the soil. But of the monks of Melrose, Kelso, Aberbrothock, Iona, etc. etc. etc., they can tell nothing but that such a race existed, and inhabited the stately ruins of these monasteries. The quiet, slow, and uniform life of those recluse beings glided on, it may be, like a dark and silent stream, fed from unknown resources, and vanishing from the eye without leaving any marked trace of its course. The life of the chieftain was a mountain torrent thundering over rock and precipice, which, less deep and profound in itself, leaves on the minds of the terrified spectators those deep impressions of awe and wonder which are most readily handed down to posterity.

'Among the various monuments exhibited at Iona is one where a Maclean lies in the same grave with one of the Macfies or Macduffies of Colonsay, with whom he had lived in alternate friendship and enmity during their lives. "He lies above him during death," said one of Maclean's followers, as his chief was interred, "as he was above him during life." There is a very ancient monument lying among those of the Macleans, but perhaps more ancient than any of them; it has a knight riding on horseback, and behind him a minstrel playing on a harp; this is conjectured to be Reginald Macdonald of the Isles, but there seems no reason for disjoining him from his kindred who sleep in the cathedral. A supposed ancestor of the Stewarts, called Paul Purser, or Paul the Purse-bearer (treasurer to the King of Scotland), is said to lie under a stone near the Lords of the Isles. Most of the monuments engraved by Pennant are still in the same state of preservation, as are the few ancient crosses which are left. What a sight Iona must have been, when 360 crosses, of the same size and beautiful workmanship, were ranked upon the little rocky ridge of eminences which form the background to the cathedral! Part of the tower of the cathedral has fallen since I was here. It would require a better architect than I am, to say anything concerning the antiquity of these ruins, but I conceive those of the nunnery and of the *Reilig nan Oran*, or Oran's chapel, are decidedly the most ancient. Upon the cathedral and buildings attached to it there are marks of repairs at different times, some of them a late date, being obviously designed not to enlarge the buildings but to retrench them. We take a reluctant leave of Iona, and go on board.

'The haze and dulness of the atmosphere seem to render it dubious if we can proceed, as we intended, to Staffa to-day—for mist among these islands is rather unpleasant. Erskine reads prayers on deck to all hands, and introduces a very apt allusion to our being now in sight of the first Christian Church from which Revelation was diffused over Scotland and all its islands. There is a very good form of prayer for the Lighthouse Service, composed by the Rev. Mr. Brunton.[1] A pleasure vessel lies under our lee from Belfast, with an Irish party related to Macneil of Colonsay. The haze is fast degenerating into downright rain, and that right heavy—verifying the words of Collins—

> And thither where beneath the *showery west*
> The mighty Kings of three fair realms are laid.[2]

After dinner, the weather being somewhat cleared, sailed for Staffa, and took boat. The surf running heavy up between the island and the adjacent rock, called Booshala, we landed at a creek near the Cormorant's cave. The mist now returned so thick as to hide all view of Iona, which was our landmark ; and although Duff, Stevenson, and I had been formerly on the isle, we could not agree upon the proper road to the cave. I engaged myself, with Duff and Erskine, in a clamber of great toil and danger, and which at length brought me to the *Cannon-ball*, as they call a round granite stone moved by the sea up and down in a groove of rock, which it has worn for itself, with a noise resembling thunder. Here I gave up my research, and returned to my companions, who had not been more fortunate. As night was now falling, we resolved to go aboard and postpone the adventure of the enchanted cavern until next day. The yacht came to an anchor with the purpose of remaining off the island all night, but the hardness of the ground, and the weather becoming squally, obliged us to return to our safer mooring at Y-Columb-Kill.

'29*th August* 1814.—Night squally and rainy—morning ditto—we weigh, however, and return toward Staffa, and, very happily, the day clears as we approach the isle. As we ascertained the situation of the cave, I shall only make this memorandum, that when the weather will serve, the best landing is to the lee of Booshala, a little conical islet or rock, composed of basaltic columns placed in an oblique or sloping position. In this way, you land at once on the flat causeway, formed by the heads of truncated pillars, which leads to the cave. But if the state of tide renders it impossible to land under Booshala, then take one of the adjacent creeks; in which case, keeping to the left hand along the top of the ledge of rocks which girdles in the isle, you find a dangerous and precipitous descent to the causeway aforesaid, from the table. Here we were under the necessity of towing our Commodore, Hamilton, whose gallant heart never fails him, whatever the tenderness of his toes may do. He was successfully lowered by a rope down the precipice, and proceeding along the flat terrace or causeway already mentioned, we reached the celebrated cave. I am not sure whether I was not more affected by this second, than by the first view of it. The stupendous columnar side walls—the depth and strength of the ocean with which the cavern is filled—the variety of tints formed by stalactites dropping and petrifying between the pillars, and resembling a sort of chasing of yellow or cream-coloured marble filling the interstices of the roof—the corresponding variety below, where the ocean rolls over a red, and in some places a violet-coloured rock, the basis of the basaltic pillars—the dreadful noise of those august billows so well corresponding with the grandeur of the scene—are all circumstances elsewhere unparalleled. We have now seen in our voyage the three grandest caverns in Scotland, Smowe, Macallister's cave, and Staffa; so that, like the Troglodytes of yore, we may be supposed to know something of the matter. It is, however, impossible to compare scenes of natures so different, nor, were I compelled to assign a preference to any of the three, could I do it but with reference to their distinct characters, which might affect different individuals in different degrees. The characteristic of the Smowe cave may in this case be called the terrific, for the difficulties which oppose the stranger are of a nature so uncommonly wild as, for the first time at least, convey an impression of terror—with which the scenes to which he is introduced fully correspond. On the other hand, the dazzling whiteness of the incrustations in Macallister's cave, the elegance of the entablature, the beauty of its limpid pool, and the graceful dignity of its arch, render its leading features those of severe and chastened beauty. Staffa, the third of these subterraneous wonders, may challenge sublimity as its principal characteristic. Without the savage gloom of the Smowe cave, and investigated with more apparent ease, though, perhaps, with equal real danger, the stately regularity of its columns forms a contrast to the grotesque imagery of Macallister's cave, combining at once the sentiments of grandeur and beauty. The former is, however, predominant, as it must necessarily be in any scene of the kind.

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[1] The Rev. Alexander Brunton, D.D., now (1836) Professor of Oriental Languages in the University of Edinburgh.

[2] Ode on the Superstitions of the Highlands.

'We had scarce left Staffa when the wind and rain returned. It was Erskine's object and mine to dine at Torloisk on Loch Tua, the seat of my valued friend Mrs. Maclean Clephane, and her accomplished daughters. But in going up Loch Tua between Ulva and Mull with this purpose,

So thick was the mist on the ocean green,
Nor cape nor headland could be seen.[1]

It was late before we came to anchor in a small bay presented by the little island of Gometra, which may be regarded as a continuation of Ulva. We therefore dine aboard, and after dinner, Erskine and I take the boat and row across the loch under a heavy rain. We could not see the house of Torloisk, so very thick was the haze, and we were a good deal puzzled how and where to achieve a landing ; at length, espying a cart-road, we resolved to trust to its guidance, as we knew we must be near the house. We therefore went ashore with our servants, *à la bonne aventure*, under a drizzling rain. This was soon a matter of little consequence, for the necessity of crossing a swollen brook wetted me considerably, and Erskine, whose foot slipped, most completely. In wet and weary plight we reached the house, after a walk of a mile, in darkness, dirt, and rain, and it is hardly necessary to say that the pleasure of seeing our friends soon banished all recollection of our unpleasant voyage and journey.

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[1] So thick a haze o'erspreads the sky,
They cannot see the Sun on high.
Southey's *Inchcape Rock.*

'30*th August* 1814.—The rest of our friends come ashore by invitation, and breakfast with the ladies, whose kindness would fain have delayed us for a few days, and at last condescended to ask for one day only—but even this could not be, our time wearing short. Torloisk is finely situated upon the coast of Mull, facing Staffa. It is a good comfortable house, to which Mrs. Clephane has made some additions. The grounds around have been dressed, so as to smooth their ruggedness, without destroying the irregular and wild character peculiar to the scene and country. In this, much taste has been displayed. At Torloisk, as at Dunvegan, trees grow freely and rapidly, and the extensive plantations formed by Mrs. C. serve to show that nothing but a little expense and patience on the part of the proprietors, with attention to planting in proper places at first, and in keeping up fences afterward, are awanting to remove the reproach of nakedness, so often thrown upon the Western Isles. With planting comes shelter, and the proper allotment and division of fields. With all this Mrs. Clephane is busied, and, I trust, successfully; I am sure, actively and usefully. Take leave of my fair friends, with regret that I cannot prolong my stay for a day or two. When we come on board, we learn that Staffa-Macdonald is just come to his house of Ulva; this is a sort of unpleasant dilemma, for we cannot now go there without some neglect towards Mrs. Maclean Clephane; and, on the other hand, from his habits with all of us, he may be justly displeased with our quitting his very threshold without asking for him. However, upon the whole matter, and being already under weigh, we judged it best to work out of the loch, and continue our purpose of rounding the northern extremity of Mull, and then running down the Sound between Mull and the mainland. We had not long pursued our voyage before we found it was like to be a very slow one. The wind fell away entirely, and after repeated tacks we could hardly clear the extreme north-western point of Mull by six o'clock—which must have afforded amusement to the ladies whose hospitable entreaties we had resisted, as we were almost all the while visible from Torloisk. A fine evening, but scarce a breath of wind.

'31*st August* 1814.—Went on deck between three and four in the morning, and found the vessel almost motionless in a calm sea, scarce three miles advanced on her voyage. We had, however, rounded the north-western side of Mull, and were advancing between the north-eastern side and the rocky and wild shores of Ardnamurchan on the mainland of Scotland. Astern were visible in bright moonlight the distant mountains of Rum; yet nearer, the remarkable ridge in the isle of Egg, called Scuir-Egg; and nearest of all the low isle of Muick. After enjoying this prospect for some time, returned to my berth. Rise before eight—a delightful day, but very calm, and the little wind there is decidedly against us. Creeping on slowly, we observe, upon the shore of Ardnamurchan, a large old castle called Mingary. It appears to be surrounded with a very high wall, forming a kind of polygon, in order to adapt itself to the angles of a precipice overhanging the sea, on which the castle is founded. Within or beyond the wall, and probably forming part of an inner court, I observed a steep roof and windows, probably of the 17th century. The whole, as seen with a spy-glass, seems ruinous. As we proceed, we open on the left hand Loch Sunart, running deep into the mainland, crossed by distant ridges of rocks, and terminating apparently among the high mountains above Strontian. On the right hand we open the Sound of Mull, and pass the Bloody Bay, which acquired that name from a desperate battle fought between an ancient Lord of the Isles and his son. The latter was assisted by the Macleans of Mull, then in the plenitude of their power, but was defeated. This was a sea-fight; galleys being employed on each side. It has bequeathed a name to a famous pibroch.

'Proceeding southward, we open the beautiful bay of Tobermory, or Mary's Well. The mouth of this fine natural roadstead is closed by an isle called Colvay, having two passages, of which only one, the northerly, is passable for ships. The bay is surrounded by steep hills, covered with copsewood, through which several brooks seek the sea in a succession of beautiful cascades. The village has been established as a fishing station by the Society for British Fisheries. The houses along the quay are two and three stories high, and well built; the feuars paying to the Society sixpence per foot of their line of front. On the top of a steep bank, rising above the first town, runs another line of second-rate cottages, which pay fourpence per foot; and behind are huts, much superior to the ordinary sheds of the country, which pay only twopence per foot. The town is all built upon a regular plan, laid down by the Society. The new part is reasonably clean, and the old not unreasonably dirty. We landed at an excellent quay, which is not yet finished, and found the little place looked thriving and active. The people were getting in their patches of corn; and the shrill voices of the children, attending their parents in the field, and loading the little ponies which are used in transporting the grain, formed a chorus not disagreeable to those whom it reminds of similar sounds at home. The praise of comparative cleanliness does not extend to the lanes around Tobermory, in one of which I had nearly been effectually bogged. But the richness of the round steep green knolls, clothed with copse, and glancing with cascades, and a pleasant peep at a small fresh-water loch embosomed among them—the view of the bay, surrounded and guarded by the island of Colvay—the gliding of two or three vessels in the more distant Sound—and the row of the gigantic Ardnamurchan mountains closing the scene to the north, almost justify the eulogium of Sacheverell, who, in 1688, declared the bay of Tobermory might equal any prospect in Italy. It is said that Sacheverell made some money by weighing up the treasures lost in the Florida, a vessel of the Spanish

Armada, which was wrecked in the harbour. He himself affirms, that though the use of the diving-bells was at first successful, yet the attempt was afterwards disconcerted by bad weather.

'Tobermory takes its name from a spring dedicated to the Virgin, which was graced by a chapel; but no vestiges remain of the chapel, and the spring rises in the middle of a swamp, whose depth and dirt discouraged the nearer approach of Protestant pilgrims. Mr. Stevenson, whose judgment is unquestionable, thinks that the village should have been built on the island called Colvay, and united to the continent by a key, or causeway, built along the southernmost channel, which is very shallow. By this means the people would have been much nearer the fishings, than retired into the depth of the bay.

'About three o'clock we get on board, and a brisk and favourable breeze arises, which carries us smoothly down the Sound. We soon pass Arros, with its fragment of a castle, behind which is the house of Mr. Maxwell (an odd name for this country), chamberlain to the Duke of Argyle, which reminds me of much kindness and hospitality received from him and Mr. Stewart, the sheriff-substitute, when I was formerly in Mull. On the shore of Morven, on the opposite side, pass the ruins of a small fortalice, called Donagail, situated as usual on a precipice overhanging the sea. The "woody Morven," though the quantity of shaggy diminutive copse, which springs up where it obtains any shelter, still shows that it must once have merited the epithet, is now, as visible from the Sound of Mull, a bare country—of which the hills towards the sea have a slope much resembling those in Selkirkshire, and accordingly afford excellent pasture, and around several farm-houses well cultivated and improved fields. I think I observe considerable improvement in husbandry, even since I was here last; but there is a difference in coming from Oban and Cape Wrath.—Open Loch Alline, a beautiful salt-water lake, with a narrow outlet to the Sound. It is surrounded by round hills, sweetly fringed with green copse below, and one of which exhibits to the spy-glass ruins of a castle. There is great promise of beauty in its interior, but we cannot see everything. The land on the southern bank of the entrance slopes away into a sort of promontory, at the extremity of which are the very imperfect ruins of the castle of Ardtornish, to which the Lords of the Isles summoned parliaments, and from whence one of them dated a treaty with the Crown of England as an independent Prince. These ruins are seen to most advantage from the south, where they are brought into a line with one high fragment towards the west predominating over the rest. The shore of the promontory on the south side becomes rocky, and when it slopes round to the west, rises into a very bold and high precipitous bank, skirting the bay on the western side, partly cliffy, partly covered with brushwood, with various streams dashing over it from a great height. Above the old castle of Ardtornish, and about where the promontory joins the land, stands the present mansion, a neat white-washed house, with several well-enclosed and well-cultivated fields surrounding it.

'The high and dignified character assumed by the shores of Morven after leaving Ardtornish continues till we open the Loch Linnhe, the commencement of the great chain of inland lakes running up to Fort-William, and which it is proposed to unite with Inverness by means of the Caledonian Canal. The wisdom of the plan adopted in this national measure seems very dubious. Had the Canal been of more moderate depth, and the burdens imposed upon passing vessels less expensive, there can be no doubt that the coasters, sloops, and barks would have carried on a good trade by means of it. But the expense and plague of locks, etc., may prevent these humble vessels from taking this abridged voyage, while ships above twenty or thirty tons will hesitate to engage themselves in the intricacies of a long lake navigation, exposed, without room for manœuvring, to all the sudden squalls of the mountainous country. Ahead of us, in the mouth of Loch Linnhe, lies the low and fertile isle of Lismore, formerly the appanage of the Bishops of the Isles, who, as usual, knew where to choose church patrimony. The coast of the Mull, on the right hand of the Sound, has a black, rugged, and unimproved character. Above Scallister Bay are symptoms of improvement. Moonlight has risen upon us as we pass Duart Castle, now an indistinct mass upon its projecting promontory. It was garrisoned for Government so late as 1780, but is now ruinous. We see, at about a mile's distance, the fatal shelve on which Duart exposed the daughter of Argyle, on which Miss Baillie's play of the Family Legend is founded, but now,

> Without either sign or sound of their shock,
> The waves flowed over the Lady's rock.[1]

The placid state of the sea is very different from what I have seen it, when six stout rowers could scarce give a boat headway through the conflicting tides. These fits of violence so much surprised and offended a body of the Camerons, who were bound upon some expedition to Mull, and had been accustomed to the quietness of lake-navigation, that they drew their dirks, and began to stab the waves—from which popular tale this run of tide is called *the Men of Lochaber*. The weather being delightfully moderate, we agree to hover hereabout all night, or anchor under the Mull shore, should it be necessary, in order to see Dunstaffnage to-morrow morning. The isle of Kerrera is now in sight, forming the bay of Oban. Beyond lie the varied and magnificent summits of the chain of mountains bordering Loch Linnhe, as well as those between Loch Awe and Loch Etive, over which the summit of Ben Cruachan is proudly prominent. Walk on deck, admiring this romantic prospect until ten; then below, and turn in.

'*1st September* 1814.—Rise betwixt six and seven, and having discreetly secured our breakfast, take boat for the old castle of Dunstaffnage, situated upon a promontory on the side of Loch Linnhe and near to Loch Etive.

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[1] Southey's *Inchcape Rock*.

Nothing could exceed the beauty of the day and of the prospect. We coasted the low, large, and fertile isle of Lismore, where a Catholic Bishop, Chisholm, has established a seminary of young men intended for priests, and what is a better thing, a valuable lime-work. Report speaks well of the lime, but indifferently of the progress of the students. Tacking to the shore of the loch, we land at Dunstaffnage, once, it is said, the seat of the Scottish monarchy, till success over the Picts and Saxons transferred their throne to Scoone, Dunfermline, and at length to Edinburgh. The castle is still the King's (nominally), and the Duke of Argyle (nominally also) is hereditary keeper. But the real right of property is in the family of the depute-keeper, to which it was assigned as an appanage, the first possessor being a natural son of an Earl of Argyle. The shell of the castle, for little more now remains, bears marks of extreme antiquity. It is square in form, with round towers at three of the angles, and is situated upon a lofty precipice, carefully scarped on all sides to render it perpendicular. The entrance is by a staircase, which conducts you to a wooden landing-place in front of the portal-door. This landing-place could formerly be raised at pleasure, being of the nature of a draw-bridge. When raised, the place was inaccessible. You pass under an ancient arch, with a low vault (being the porter's lodge) on the right hand, and flanked by loop-holes, for firing upon any hostile guest who might force his passage thus far. This admits you into the inner court, which is about eighty feet square. It contains two mean-looking buildings, about sixty or seventy years old; the ancient castle having been consumed by fire in 1715. It is said that the nephew of the proprietor was the incendiary. We went into the apartments, and found they did not exceed the promise of the exterior; but they admitted us to walk upon the battlements of the old castle, which displayed a most splendid prospect. Beneath, and far projected into the loch, were seen the woods and houses of Campbell of Lochnell. A little summer-house, upon an eminence, belonging to this wooded bank, resembles an ancient monument. On the right, Loch Etive, after pouring its waters like a furious cataract over a strait called Connell Ferry, comes between the castle and a round island belonging to its demesne, and nearly insulates the situation. In front is a low rocky eminence on the opposite side of the arm, through which Loch Etive flows into Loch Linnhe. Here was situated *Beregenium*, once, it is said, a British capital city; and, as our informant told us, the largest market-town in Scotland. Of this splendour are no remains but a few trenches and excavations, which the distance did not allow us to examine. The ancient masonry of Dunstaffnage is mouldering fast under time and neglect. The foundations are beginning to decay, and exhibit gaps between the rock and the wall; and the battlements are become ruinous. The inner court is encumbered with ruins. A hundred pounds or two would put this very ancient fortress in a state of preservation for ages, but I fear this is not to be expected. The stumps of large trees, which had once shaded the vicinity of the castle, gave symptoms of decay in the family of Dunstaffnage. We were told of some ancient spurs and other curiosities preserved in the castle, but they were locked up. In the vicinity of the castle is a chapel which had once been elegant, but by the building up of windows, etc., is now heavy enough. I have often observed that the means adopted in Scotland for repairing old buildings are generally as destructive of their grace and beauty, as if that had been the express object. Unfortunately, most churches, particularly, have gone through both stages of destruction, having been first repaired by the building up of the beautiful shafted windows, and then the roof being suffered to fall in, they became ruins indeed, but without any touch of the picturesque farther than their massive walls and columns may afford. Near the chapel of Dunstaffnage is a remarkable echo.

'Re-embarked, and, rowing about a mile and a half or better along the shore of the lake, again landed under the ruins of the old castle of Dunolly. This fortress, which, like that of Dunstaffnage, forms a marked feature in this exquisite landscape, is situated on a bold and precipitous promontory overhanging the lake. The principal part of the ruins now remaining is a square tower or keep of the ordinary size, which had been the citadel of the castle ; but fragments of other buildings, overgrown with ivy, show that Dunolly had once been a place of considerable importance. These had enclosed a court-yard, of which the keep probably formed one side, the entrance being by a very steep ascent from the land side, which had formerly been cut across by a deep moat, and defended doubtless by outworks and a drawbridge. Beneath the castle stands the modern house of Dunolly, a decent mansion, suited to the reduced state of the MacDougalls of Lorn, who, from being Barons powerful enough to give battle to and defeat Robert Bruce, are now declined into private gentlemen of moderate fortune.

'This very ancient family is descended from Somerled, Thane, or rather, under that name, *King* of Argyle and the Hebrides. He had two sons, to one of whom he left his insular possessions—and he became founder of the dynasty of the Lords of the Isles, who maintained a stirring independence during the Middle Ages. The other was founder of the family of the MacDougalls of Lorn. One of them being married to a niece of the Red Cumming, in revenge of his slaughter at Dumfries, took a vigorous part against Robert Bruce in his struggles to maintain the independence of Scotland. At length the King, turning his whole strength towards MacDougall, encountered him at a pass near Loch Awe ; but the Highlanders, being possessed of the strong ground, compelled Bruce to retreat, and again gave him battle at Dalry, near Tynedrum, where he had concentrated his forces. Here he was again defeated, and the tradition of the MacDougall family bears that in the conflict the Lord of Lorn engaged hand to hand with Bruce, and was struck down by that monarch. As they grappled together on the ground, Bruce being uppermost, a vassal of MacDougall, called MacKeoch, relieved his master by pulling Bruce from him. In this close struggle the King left his mantle and brooch in the hands of his enemies, and the latter trophy was long preserved in the family, until it was lost in an accidental fire. Barbour tells the same story, but I think with circumstances somewhat different. When Bruce had gained the throne for which he fought so long, he displayed his resentment against the MacDougalls of Lorn by depriving them of the greatest part of their domains, which were bestowed chiefly upon the Steward of Scotland. Sir Colin Campbell, the Knight of Loch Awe, and the Knight of Glenurchy, Sir Dugald Campbell, married daughters of the Steward, and received with them great portion of the forfeiture of MacDougall. Bruce even compelled or persuaded the Lord of the Isles to divorce his wife, who was a daughter of MacDougall, and take in marriage a relation of his own. The son of the divorced lady was not permitted to succeed to the principality of the Isles, on account of his connexion with the obnoxious MacDougall. But a large appanage was allowed him upon the Mainland, where he founded the family of Glengarry.

'The family of MacDougall suffered farther reduction during the great civil war, in which they adhered to the Stewarts, and in 1715 they forfeited the small estate of Dunolly, which was then all that remained of what had once been a principality. The then representative of the family fled to France, and his son (father of the present proprietor) would have been without any means of education, but for the spirit of clanship, which induced one of the name, in the humble situation of keeper of a public-house at Dumbarton, to take his young chief to reside with him, and be at the expense of his education and maintenance until his fifteenth or sixteenth year. He proved a clever and intelligent man, and made good use of the education he received. When the affair of 1745 was in agitation, it was expected by the south-western clans that Charles Edward would have landed near Oban, instead of which he disembarked at Loch-nan-augh, in Arisaig. Stuart of Appin sent information of his landing to MacDougall, who gave orders to his brother to hold the clan in readiness to rise, and went himself to consult with the chamberlain of the Earl of Breadalbane, who was also in the secret. He found this person indisposed to rise, alleging that Charles had disappointed them both in the place of landing, and the support he had promised. MacDougall then resolved to play cautious, and went to visit the Duke of Argyle, then residing at Roseneath, probably without any determined purpose as to his future proceedings. While he was waiting the Duke's leisure, he saw a horseman arrive at full gallop, and shortly after, the Duke entering the apartment where MacDougall was, with a map in his hand, requested him, after friendly salutations, to point out Loch-nan-augh on that map. MacDougall instantly saw that the secret of Charles's landing had transpired, and resolved to make a merit of being the first who should give details. The persuasions of the Duke determined him to remain quiet, and the reward was the restoration of the little state of Dunolly, lost by his father in 1715. This gentleman lived to a very advanced stage of life, and was succeeded by Peter MacDougall, Esq., now of Dunolly. I had these particulars respecting the restoration of the estate from a near relation of the family, whom we met at Dunstaffnage.

'The modern house of Dunolly is on the neck of land under the old castle, having on the one hand the lake with its islands and mountains; on the other, two romantic eminences tufted with copsewood, of which the higher is called Barmore, and is now planted. I have seldom seen a more romantic and delightful situation, to which the peculiar state of the family gave a sort of moral interest. Mrs. MacDougall, observing strangers surveying the ruins, met us on our return, and most politely insisted upon our accepting fruit and refreshments. This was a compliment meant to absolute strangers, but when our names became known to her, the good lady's entreaties that we would stay till Mr. MacDougall returned from his ride, became very pressing. She was in deep mourning for the loss of an eldest son, who had fallen bravely in Spain and under Wellington, a death well becoming the descendant of so famed a race. The second son, a lieutenant in the navy, had, upon this family misfortune, obtained leave to visit his parents for the first time after many years' service, but had now returned to his ship. Mrs. M. spoke with melancholy pride of the death of her eldest son, with hope and animation of the prospects of the survivor. A third is educated for the law. Declining the hospitality offered us, Mrs. M. had the goodness to walk with us along the shore towards Oban, as far as the property of Dunolly extends, and showed us a fine spring, called *Tobar nan Gall*, or the Well of the Stranger, where our sailors supplied themselves with excellent water, which has been rather a scarce article with us, as it soon becomes past a landsman's use on board ship. On the seashore, about a quarter of a mile from the castle, is a huge fragment of the rock called *plum-pudding stone*, which art or nature has formed into a gigantic pillar. Here it is said Fion or Fingal tied his dog Bran—here also the celebrated Lord of the Isles tied up his dogs when he came upon a visit to the Lords of Lorn. Hence it is called *Clach nan Con; i.e.* the Dog's Stone. A tree grew once on the top of this bare mass of composite stone, but it was cut down by a curious damsel of the family, who was desirous to see a treasure said to be deposited beneath it. Enjoyed a pleasant walk of a mile along the beach to Oban, a town of some consequence, built in a semicircular form, around a good harbour formed by the opposite isle of Kerrara, on which Mrs. M. pointed out the place where Alexander II. died, while, at the head of a powerful armament, he meditated the reduction of the Hebrides. The field is still called Dal-ry—the King's field.

'Having taken leave of Mrs. MacDougall, we soon satisfied our curiosity concerning Oban, which owed its principal trade to the industry of two brothers, Messrs. Stevenson, who dealt in shipbuilding. One is now dead, the other almost retired from business, and trade is dull in the place. Heard of an active and industrious man, who had set up a nursery of young trees, which ought to succeed, since at present, whoever wants plants must send to Glasgow ; and how much the plants suffer during a voyage of such length, any one may conceive. Go on board after a day delightful for the serenity and clearness of the weather, as well as for the objects we had visited. I forgot to say, that through Mr. MacDougall's absence we lost an opportunity of seeing a bronze figure of one of his ancestors, called *Bacach*, or the lame, armed and mounted as for a tournament. The hero flourished in the twelfth century. After a grand council of war, we determine, as we are so near the coast of Ulster, that we will stand over and view the celebrated Giant's Causeway ; and Captain Wilson receives directions accordingly.

'*2nd September* 1814.—Another most beautiful day. The heat, for the first time since we sailed from Leith, is somewhat incommodious ; so we spread a handsome awning to save our complexions, God wot, and breakfast beneath it in style. The breeze is gentle, and quite favourable. It has conducted us from the extreme cape of Mull, called the Black Head of Mull, into the Sound of Islay. We view in passing that large and fertile island, the property of Campbell of Shawfield, who has introduced an admirable style of farming among his tenants. Still farther behind us retreats the island of Jura, with the remarkable mountains called the Paps of Jura, which form a landmark at a great distance. They are very high, but in our eyes, so much accustomed of late to immense height, do not excite much surprise. Still farther astern is the small isle of Scarba, which, as we see it, seems to be a single hill. In the passage or sound between Scarba and the extremity of Jura is a terrible run of tide, which, contending with the sunk rocks and islets of that foul channel, occasions the succession of whirlpools called the Gulf of Corrievreckan. Seen at this distance, we cannot judge of its terrors. The sight of Corrievreckan and of the low rocky isle of Colonsay, betwixt which and Islay we are now passing, strongly recalls to my mind poor John Leyden and his tale of the Mermaid and MacPhail of Colonsay.[1] Probably the name of the hero should have been MacFie, for to the MacDuffies (by abridgment MacFies) Colonsay of old pertained. It is said the last of these MacDuffies was executed as an oppressor by order of the Lord of the Isles, and lies buried in the adjacent small island of Oransay, where there is an old chapel with several curious monuments, which, to avoid losing this favourable breeze, we are compelled to leave unvisited. Colonsay now belongs to a gentleman named MacNeil. On the right beyond it opens at a distance the western coast of Mull, which we already visited in coming from the northward. We see the promontory of Ross, which is terminated by Y-Columb-Kill, also now visible. The shores of Loch Tua and Ulva are in the blue distance, with the little archipelago which lies around Staffa. Still farther, the hills of Rum can just be distinguished from the blue sky. We are now arrived at the extreme point of Islay, termed, from the strong tides, the *Runs of Islay*. We here only feel them as a large but soft swell of the sea, the weather being delightfully clear and serene. In the course of the evening we lose sight of the Hebrides, excepting Islay, having now attained the western side of that island.

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[1] See Minstrelsy of the Border—Scott's Poetical Works, vol. iv. pp. 285-306.

'*3rd September* 1814.—In the morning early we are off Innistulhan, an islet very like Inchkeith in size and appearance, and, like Inchkeith, displaying a lighthouse. Messrs. Hamilton, Duff, and Stevenson go ashore to visit the Irish lighthouse and compare notes. A fishing-boat comes off with four or five stout lads, without neckerchiefs or hats, and the best of whose joint garments selected would hardly equip an Edinburgh beggar. Buy from this specimen of Paddy in his native land some fine John Dories for threepence each. The mainland of Ireland adjoining to this island (being part of the county of Donegal) resembles Scotland, and though hilly, seems well cultivated upon the whole. A brisk breeze directly against us. We beat to windward by assistance of a strong tide-stream, in order to weather the head of Innishowen, which covers the entrance of Lough Foyle, with the purpose of running up the loch to see Londonderry, so celebrated for its siege in 1689.

But short tacks and long tacks were in vain, and at dinner-time, having lost our tide, we find ourselves at all disadvantage both against wind and sea. Much combustion at our meal, and the manœuvres by which we attempted to eat and drink remind me of the enchanted drinking-cup in the old ballad,—

> Some shed it on their shoulder,
>   Some shed it on their thigh ;
> And he that did not hit his mouth
>   Was sure to hit his eye.

In the evening, backgammon and cards are in great request. We have had our guns shotted all this day for fear of the Yankees—a privateer having been seen off Tyree Islands, and taken some vessels—as is reported.—About nine o'clock weather the Innishowen head, and enter the Lough, and fire a gun as a signal for a pilot. The people here are great smugglers ; and at the report of the gun we see several lights on shore disappear.—About the middle of the day too, our appearance (much resembling a revenue cutter) occasioned a smoke being made in the midst of a very rugged cliff on the shore—a signal probably to any of the smugglers' craft that might be at sea. Come to anchor in eight fathom water, expecting our pilot.

'*4th September* 1814.—Waked in the morning with good hope of hearing service in Derry Cathedral, as we had felt ourselves under weigh since daylight ; but these expectations vanished when, going on deck, we found ourselves only half-way up Lough Foyle, and at least ten miles from Derry. Very little wind, and that against us ; and the navigation both shoally and intricate. Called a council of war ; and after considering the difficulty of getting up to Derry, and the chance of being wind-bound when we do get there, we resolve to renounce our intended visit to that town. We had hardly put the ship about, when the Irish Æolus shifted his trumpet, and opposed our exit, as he had formerly been unfavourable to our progress up the lake. At length, we are compelled to betake ourselves to towing, the wind fading into an absolute calm. This gives us time enough to admire the northern, or Donegal, side of Lough Foyle—the other being hidden from us by haze and distance. Nothing can be more favourable than this specimen of Ireland.—A beautiful variety of cultivated slopes, intermixed with banks of wood; rocks skirted with a distant ridge of heathy hills, watered by various brooks; the glens or banks being, in general, planted or covered with copse; and finally, studded by a succession of villas and gentlemen's seats, good farm-houses, and neat white-washed cabins. Some of the last are happily situated upon the verge of the sea, with banks of copse or a rock or two rising behind them, and the white sand in front. The land, in general, seems well cultivated and enclosed—but in some places the enclosures seem too small, and the ridges too crooked, for proper farming. We pass two gentlemen's seats, called White Castle and Red Castle; the last a large good-looking mansion, with trees, and a pretty vale sloping upwards from the sea. As we approach the termination of the Lough, the ground becomes more rocky and barren, and the cultivation interrupted by impracticable patches, which have been necessarily abandoned. Come in view of Green Castle, a large ruinous castle, said to have belonged to the MacWilliams. The remains are romantically situated upon a green bank sloping down to the sea, and are partly covered with ivy. From their extent, the place must have been a chieftain's residence of the very first consequence. Part of the ruins appear to be founded upon a high red rock, which the eve at first blends with the masonry. To the east of the ruins, upon a cliff overhanging the sea, are a modern fortification and barrack-yard, and beneath, a large battery for protection of the shipping which may enter the Lough; the guns are not yet mounted. The Custom-house boat boards us and confirms the account that American cruisers are upon the coast. Drift out of the Lough, and leave behind us this fine country, all of which belongs in property to Lord Donegal; other possessors only having long leases, as sixty years, or so forth. Red Castle, however, before distinguished as a very good-looking house, is upon a perpetual lease. We discharge our pilot—the gentlemen go ashore with him in the boat, in order to put foot on Irish land. I shall defer that pleasure till I can promise myself something to see. When our gentlemen return, we read prayers on deck. After dinner go ashore at the small fishing-village of Port Rush, pleasantly situated upon a peninsula, which forms a little harbour. Here we are received by Dr. Richardson, the inventor of the fiorin-grass (or of some of its excellences). He cultivates this celebrated vegetable on a very small scale, his whole farm not exceeding four acres. Here I learn, with inexpressible surprise and distress, the death of one of the most valued of the few friends whom these memoranda might interest.[1] She was, indeed, a rare example of the soundest good sense, and the most exquisite purity of moral feeling, united with the utmost grace and elegance of personal beauty, and with manners becoming the most dignified rank in British society. There was a feminine softness in all her deportment, which won universal love, as her firmness of mind and correctness of principle commanded veneration. To her family her loss is inexpressibly great. I know not whether it was the purity of her mind, or the ethereal cast of her features and form, but I could never associate in my mind her idea and that of mortality; so that the shock is the more heavy, as being totally unexpected. God grant comfort to the afflicted survivor and his family!

'*5th September* 1814.—Wake, or rather rise at six, for I have waked the whole night, or fallen into broken sleeps only to be hag-ridden by the nightmare. Go ashore with a heavy heart, to see sights which I had much rather leave alone. Land under Dunluce, a ruined castle built by the MacGilligans, or MacQuillens, but afterwards taken from them by a Macdonnell, ancestor of the Earls of Antrim, and destroyed by Sir John Perrot, Lord-Lieutenant in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. This

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[1] Harriet, Duchess of Buccleuch, died Aug. 24, 1814.

Macdonnell came from the Hebrides at the head of a Scottish colony. The site of the castle much resembles Dunnottar, but it is on a smaller scale. The ruins occupy perhaps more than an acre of ground, being the level top of a high rock advanced into the sea, by which it is surrounded on three sides, and divided from the mainland by a deep chasm. The access was by a narrow bridge, of which there now remains but a single rib, or ledge, forming a doubtful and a precarious access to the ruined castle. On the outer side of the bridge are large remains of outworks, probably for securing cattle, and for domestic offices—and the vestiges of a chapel. Beyond the bridge are an outer and inner gateway, with their defences. The large gateway forms one angle of the square enclosure of the fortress, and at the other landward angle is built a large round tower. There are vestiges of similar towers occupying the angles of the precipice overhanging the sea. These towers were connected by a curtain, on which artillery seems to have been mounted. Within this circuit are the ruins of an establishment of feudal grandeur on the large scale. The great hall, forming, it would seem, one side of the inner court, is sixty paces long, lighted by windows which appear to have been shafted with stone, but are now ruined. Adjacent are the great kitchen and ovens, with a variety of other buildings, but no square tower, or keep. The most remarkable part of Dunluce, however, is, that the whole mass of plum-pudding rock on which the fort is built is completely perforated by a cave sloping downwards from the inside of the moat or dry-ditch beneath the bridge, and opening to the sea on the other side. It might serve the purpose of a small harbour, especially if they had, as is believed, a descent to the cave from within the castle. It is difficult to conceive the use of the aperture to the land, unless it was in some way enclosed and defended. Above the ruinous castle is a neat farm-house. Mrs. More, the good-wife, a Scoto-Hibernian, received us with kindness and hospitality which did honour to the nation of her birth, as well as of her origin, in a house whose cleanliness and neatness might have rivalled England. Her churn was put into immediate motion on our behalf, and we were loaded with all manner of courtesy, as well as good things. We heard here of an armed schooner having been seen off the coast yesterday, which fired on a boat that went off to board her, and would seem therefore to be a privateer, or armed smuggler.

'Return on board for breakfast, and then again take boat for the Giant's Causeway—having first shotted the guns, and agreed on a signal, in case this alarming stranger should again make his appearance. Visit two caves, both worth seeing, but not equal to those we have seen; one, called Port Coon, opens in a small cove, or bay—the outer reach opens into an inner cave, and that again into the sea. The other, called Down Kerry, is a sea-cave, like that on the eastern side of Loch Eribol—a high arch up which the sea rolls: — the weather being quiet we sailed in very nearly to the upper end. We then rowed on to the celebrated Causeway, a platform composed of basaltic pillars, projecting into the sea like the pier of a harbour. As I was tired, and had a violent headache, I did not land, but could easily see that the regularity of the columns was the same as at Staffa; but that island contains a much more extensive and curious specimen of this curious phenomenon.

'Row along the shores of this celebrated point, which are extremely striking as well as curious. They open into a succession of little bays, each of which has precipitous banks graced with long ranges of the basaltic pillars, sometimes placed above each other, and divided by masses of interweaving strata, or by green sloping banks of earth of extreme steepness. These remarkable ranges of columns are in some places chequered by horizontal strata of a red rock or earth, of the appearance of ochre; so that the green of the grassy banks, the dark-grey or black appearance of the columns, with those red seams and other varieties of the interposed strata, have most uncommon and striking effects. The outline of these cliffs is as singular as their colouring. In several places the earth has wasted away from single columns, and left them standing insulated and erect, like the ruined colonnade of an ancient temple, upon the verge of the precipice. In other places, the disposition of the basaltic ranges presents singular appearances, to which the guides give names agreeable to the images which they are supposed to represent. Each of the little bays or inlets has also its appropriate name. One is called the Spanish Bay, from one of the Spanish Armada having been wrecked there. Thus our voyage has repeatedly traced the memorable remnants of that celebrated squadron. The general name of the cape adjacent to the Causeway is Bengore Head. To those who have seen Staffa, the peculiar appearance of the Causeway itself will lose much of its effect; but the grandeur of the neighbouring scenery will still maintain the reputation of Bengore Head. The people ascribe all these wonders to Fin MacCoul, whom they couple with a Scottish giant called Ben-an something or other. The traveller is plied by guides, who make their profit by selling pieces of crystal, agate, or chalcedony, found in the interstices of the rocks. Our party brought off some curious joints of the columns, and, had I been quite as I am wont to be, I would have selected four to be capitals of a rustic porch at Abbotsford. But, alas! alas! I am much out of love with vanity at this moment. From what we hear at the Causeway, we have every reason to think that the pretended privateer has been a gentleman's pleasure-vessel.—Continue our voyage southward, and pass between the Main of Ireland and the Isle of Rachrin, a rude heathy-looking island, once a place of refuge to Robert Bruce. This is said, in ancient times, to have been the abode of banditti, who plundered the neighbouring coast. At present it is under a long lease to a Mr. Gage, who is said to maintain excellent order among the islanders. Those of bad character he expels to Ireland, and hence it is a phrase among the people of Rachrin, when they wish ill to any one, "*May Ireland be his hinder end.*" On the Main we see the village of Ballintry, and a number of people collected, the remains of an Irish fair. Close by is a small island, called Sheep Island. We now take leave of the Irish coast, having heard nothing of its popular complaints, excepting that the good lady at Dunluce made a heavy moan against the tithes, which had compelled her husband to throw his whole farm into pasture. Stand over toward Scotland, and see the Mull of Cantyre light.

'*6th September* 1814.—Under the lighthouse at the Mull of Cantyre; situated on a desolate spot among rocks, like a Chinese pagoda in Indian drawings. Duff and Stevenson go ashore at six. Hamilton follows, but is unable to land, the sea having got up. The boat brings back letters, and I have the great comfort to learn all are well at Abbotsford. About eight the tide begins to run very strong, and the wind rising at the same time, makes us somewhat apprehensive for our boat, which had returned to attend D. and S. We observe them set off along the hills on foot, to walk, as we understand, to a bay called Carskey, five or six miles off, but the nearest spot at which they can hope to re-embark in this state of the weather. It now becomes very squally, and one of our jibsails splits. We are rather awkwardly divided into three parties—the pedestrians on shore, with whom we now observe Captain Wilson, mounted upon a pony—the boat with four sailors, which is stealing along in-shore, unable to row, and scarce venturing to carry any sail—and we in the yacht, tossing about most exceedingly. At length we reach Carskey, a quiet-looking bay, where the boat gets into shore, and fetches off our gentlemen. After this the coast of Cantyre seems cultivated and arable, but bleak and unenclosed, like many other parts of Scotland. We then learn that we have been repeatedly in the route of two American privateers, who have made many captures in the Irish Channel, particularly at Innistruhul, at the back of Islay, and on the Lewis. They are the Peacock, of twenty-two guns, and 165 men, and a schooner of eighteen guns, called the Prince of Neuchatel. These news, added to the increasing inclemency of the weather, induce us to defer a projected visit to the coast of Galloway; and indeed it is time one of us was home on many accounts. We therefore resolve, after visiting the lighthouse at Pladda, to proceed for Greenock. About four drop anchor off Pladda, a small islet lying on the south side of Arran. Go ashore and visit the establishment. When we return on board, the wind being unfavourable for the mouth of Clyde, we resolve to weigh anchor and go into Lamlash Bay.

'*7th September* 1814.—We had ample room to repent last night's resolution, for the wind, with its usual caprice, changed so soon as we had weighed anchor, blew very hard, and almost directly against us, so that we were beating up against it by short tacks, which made a most disagreeable night; as, between the noise of the wind and the sea, the clattering of the ropes and sails above, and of the moveables below, and the eternal "*ready about*," which was repeated every ten minutes when the vessel was about to tack, with the lurch and clamour which succeeds, sleep was much out of the question. We are not now in the least sick, but want of sleep is uncomfortable, and I have no agreeable reflections to amuse waking hours, excepting the hope of again rejoining my family. About six o'clock went on deck to see Lamlash Bay, which we have at length reached after a hard struggle. The morning is fine and the wind abated, so that the coast of Arran looks extremely well. It is indented with two deep bays. That called Lamlash, being covered by an island with an entrance at either end, makes a secure roadstead. The other bay, which takes its name from Brodick Castle, a seat of the Duke of Hamilton, is open. The situation of the castle is very fine, among extensive plantations, laid out with perhaps too much formality, but pleasant to the eye, as the first tract of plantation we have seen for a long time. One stripe, however, with singular want of taste, runs straight up a finely rounded hill, and turning by an obtuse angle, cuts down the opposite side with equal lack of remorse. This vile habit of opposing the line of the plantation to the natural line and bearing of the ground is one of the greatest practical errors of early planters.

As to the rest, the fields about Brodick, and the lowland of Arran in general, seem rich, well enclosed, and in good cultivation. Behind and around rise an amphitheatre of mountains, the principal a long ridge with fine swelling serrated tops, called Goat-Fell. Our wind now altogether dies away, while we want its assistance to get to the mouth of the Firth of Clyde, now opening between the extremity of the large and fertile Isle of Bute, and the lesser islands called the Cumbrays. The fertile coast of Ayrshire trends away to the south-westward, displaying many villages, and much appearance of beauty and cultivation. On the north-eastward arises the bold and magnificent screen formed by the mountains of Argyleshire and Dumbartonshire, rising above each other in gigantic succession. About noon a favourable breath of wind enables us to enter the mouth of the Clyde, passing between the larger Cumbray and the extremity of Bute. As we advance beyond the Cumbray, and open the opposite coast, see Largs, renowned for the final defeat of the Norwegian invaders by Alexander III. [A.D. 1263]. The ground of battle was a sloping, but rather gentle, ascent from the sea, above the modern Kirk of Largs. Had Haco gained the victory, it would have opened all the south-west of Scotland to his arms. On Bute, a fine and well-improved island, we open the Marquis of Bute's house of Mount Stewart, neither apparently large nor elegant in architecture, but beautifully situated among well-grown trees, with an open and straight avenue to the seashore. The whole isle is prettily varied by the rotation of crops: and the rocky ridges of Goat-Fell and other mountains in Arran are now seen behind Bute as a background. These ridges resemble much the romantic and savage outline of the mountains of Cullin, in Skye. On the southward of Largs is Kelburn, the seat of Lord Glasgow, with extensive plantations; on the northward Skelmorlie, an ancient seat of the Montgomeries. The Firth, closed to appearance by Bute and the Cumbrays, now resembles a long irregular inland lake, bordered on the one side by the low and rich coast of Renfrewshire, studded with villages and seats, and on the other by the

Highland mountains. Our breeze dies totally away, and leaves us to admire this prospect till sunset. I learn incidentally that, in the opinion of honest Captain Wilson, I have been myself the cause of all this contradictory weather. "It is all," says the Captain to Stevenson, "owing to the cave at the Isle of Egg,"—from which I had abstracted a skull. Under this odium I may labour yet longer, for assuredly the weather has been doggedly unfavourable. Night quiet and serene, but dead calm—a fine contrast to the pitching, rolling, and walloping of last night.

'*8th September.*—Waked very much in the same situation—a dead calm, but the weather very serene. With much difficulty, and by the assistance of the tide, we advanced up the Firth, and passing the village of Gourock at length reached Greenock. Took an early dinner, and embarked in the steamboat for Glasgow. We took leave of our little yacht under the repeated cheers of the sailors, who had been much pleased with their erratic mode of travelling about, so different from the tedium of a regular voyage. After we reached Glasgow—a journey which we performed at the rate of about eight miles an hour, and with a smoothness of motion which probably resembles flying—we supped together and prepared to separate.—Erskine and I go to-morrow to the Advocate's at Killermont, and thence to Edinburgh. So closes my journal. But I must not omit to say that among five or six persons, some of whom were doubtless different in tastes and pursuits, there did not occur, during the close communication of more than six weeks aboard a small vessel, the slightest difference of opinion. Each seemed anxious to submit his own wishes to those of his friends. The consequence was, that by judicious arrangement all were gratified in their turn, and frequently he who made some sacrifices to the views of his companions was rewarded by some unexpected gratification calculated particularly for his own amusement. Thus ends my little excursion, in which, bating one circumstance, which must have made me miserable for the time wherever I had learned it, I have enjoyed as much pleasure as in any six weeks of my life. We had constant exertion, a succession of wild and uncommon scenery, good-humour on board, and objects of animation and interest when we went ashore—

> Sed fugit interea—fugit irrevocabile tempus.

CHAPTER XXXIII

Letter in Verse from Zetland and Orkney—Death of the Duchess of Buccleuch—Correspondence with the Duke—Altrive Lake—Negotiation concerning the Lord of the Isles completed—Success of Waverley—Contemporaneous Criticisms on the Novel—Letters to Scott from Mr. Morritt—Mr. Lewis—and Miss Maclean Clephane—Letter from James Ballantyne to Miss Edgeworth.

1814

I QUESTION if any man ever drew his own character more fully or more pleasingly than Scott has done in the preceding diary of a six weeks' pleasure voyage. We have before us, according to the scene and occasion, the poet, the antiquary, the magistrate, the planter, and the agriculturist; but everywhere the warm yet sagacious philanthropist—everywhere the courtesy, based on the unselfishness, of the thoroughbred gentleman;—and surely never was the tenderness of a manly heart portrayed more touchingly than in the closing pages. I ought to mention that Erskine received the news of the Duchess of Buccleuch's death on the day when the party landed at Dunstaffnage; but, knowing how it would affect Scott, took means to prevent its reaching him until the expedition should be concluded. He heard the event casually mentioned by a stranger during dinner at Port Rush, and was for the moment quite overpowered.

Of the letters which Scott wrote to his friends during those happy six weeks I have recovered only one, and it is, thanks to the leisure of the yacht, in verse. The strong and easy heroics of the first section prove, I think, that Mr. Canning did not err when he told him that if he chose he might emulate even Dryden's command of that noble measure; and the dancing anapæsts of the second, show that he could with equal facility have rivalled the gay graces of Cotton, Anstey, or Moore. This epistle did not reach the Duke of Buccleuch till his lovely Duchess was no more; and I shall annex to it some communications relating to that affliction, which afford a contrast, not less interesting than melancholy, to the light-hearted glee reflected in the rhymes from the region of Magnus Troil.

'*To his Grace the Duke of Buccleuch, etc. etc. etc.*

'LIGHTHOUSE YACHT IN THE SOUND OF LERWICK,
ZETLAND, *8th August* 1814.

'Health to the chieftain from his clansman true!
From her true minstrel, health to fair Buccleuch!
Health from the isles, where dewy Morning weaves
Her chaplet with the tints that Twilight leaves;
Where late the sun scarce vanished from the sight,
And his bright pathway graced the short-lived night,
Though darker now as autumn's shades extend,
The north winds whistle and the mists ascend!—
Health from the land where eddying whirlwinds toss
The storm-rocked *cradle* of the Cape of Noss;
On outstretched cords the giddy engine slides,
His own strong arm the bold adventurer guides,
And he that lists such desperate feat to try,
May, like the sea-mew, skim 'twixt surf and sky,
And feel the mid-air gales around him blow,
And see the billows rage five hundred feet below.

Here by each stormy peak and desert shore,
The hardy islesman tugs the daring oar,
Practised alike his venturous course to keep,
Through the white breakers or the pathless deep,
By ceaseless peril and by toil to gain
A wretched pittance from the niggard main.
And when the worn-out drudge old ocean leaves,
What comfort greets him, and what hut receives?
Lady! the worst your presence ere has cheered
(When want and sorrow fled as you appeared)

Were to a Zetlander as the high dome
Of proud Drumlanrig to my humble home.
Here rise no groves, and here no gardens blow,
Here even the hardy heath scarce dares to grow;
But rocks on rocks, in mist and storm arrayed,
Stretch far to sea their giant colonnade,
With many a cavern seam'd, the dreary haunt
Of the dun seal and swarthy cormorant.
Wild round their rifted brows with frequent cry,
As of lament, the gulls and gannets fly,
And from their sable base, with sullen sound,
In sheets of whitening foam the waves rebound.

Yet even these coasts a touch of envy gain
From those whose land has known oppression's chain;
For here the industrious Dutchman comes once more
To moor his fishing craft by Bressay's shore;
Greets every former mate and brother tar,
Marvels how Lerwick 'scaped the rage of war,
Tells many a tale of Gallic outrage done,
And ends by blessing God and Wellington.
Here too the Greenland tar, a fiercer guest,
Claims a brief hour of riot, not of rest;
Proves each wild frolic that in wine has birth,
And wakes the land with brawls and boisterous mirth.
A sadder sight on yon poor vessel's prow
The captive Norse-man sits in silent woe,
And eyes the flags of Britain as they flow.
Hard fate of war, which bade her terrors sway
His destined course, and seize so mean a prey;
A bark with planks so warp'd and seams so riven,
She scarce might face the gentlest airs of heaven:
Pensive he sits, and questions oft if none
Can list his speech and understand his moan;
In vain—no islesman now can use the tongue
Of the bold Norse, from whom their lineage sprung.
Not thus of old the Norse-men hither came,
Won by the love of danger or of fame;
On every storm-beat cape a shapeless tower
Tells of their wars, their conquests, and their power;
For ne'er for Grecia's vales, nor Latian land,
Was fiercer strife than for this barren strand;
A race severe—the isle and ocean lords,
Loved for its own delight the strife of swords;
With scornful laugh the mortal pang defied,
And blest their gods that they in battle died.

Such were the sires of Zetland's simple race,
And still the eye may faint resemblance trace

In the blue eye, tall form, proportion fair,
The limbs athletic, and the long light hair—
(Such was the mien, as Scald and Minstrel sings,
Of fair-haired Harold, first of Norway's Kings);
But their high deeds to scale these crags confined,
Their only warfare is with waves and wind.

Why should I talk of Mousa's castled coast?
Why of the horrors of the Sumburgh Rost?
May not these bald disjointed lines suffice,
Penn'd while my comrades whirl the rattling dice—
While down the cabin skylight lessening shine
The rays, and eve is chased with mirth and wine?
Imagined, while down Mousa's desert bay
Our well-trimm'd vessel urged her nimble way,
While to the freshening breeze she leaned her side,
And bade her bowsprit kiss the foamy tide?

Such are the lays that Zetland Isles supply;
Drenched with the drizzly spray and dropping sky,
Weary and wet, a sea-sick minstrel I.—— W. SCOTT.'

'POSTSCRIPTUM.

'KIRKWALL, ORKNEY, *Aug.* 13, 1814.

'In respect that your Grace has commissioned a Kraken,
You will please be informed that they seldom are taken;
It is January two years, the Zetland folks say,
Since they saw the last Kraken in Scalloway bay;
He lay in the offing a fortnight or more,
But the devil a Zetlander put from the shore,
Though bold in the seas of the North to assail
The morse and the sea-horse, the grampus and whale.
If your Grace thinks I'm writing the thing that is not,
You may ask at a namesake of ours, Mr. Scott—
(He's not from our clan, though his merits deserve it,
But springs, I'm informed, from the Scotts of Scotstarvet;)[1]
He questioned the folks who beheld it with eyes,
But they differed confoundedly as to its size.
For instance, the modest and diffident swore
That it seemed like the keel of a ship, and no more—
Those of eyesight more clear, or of fancy more high,
Said it rose like an island 'twixt ocean and sky—
But all of the hulk had a steady opinion
That 'twas sure a *live* subject of Neptune's dominion—

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[1] The Scotts of Scotstarvet, and other families of the name in Fife and elsewhere, claim no kindred with the great clan of the Border—and their armorial bearings are different.

And I think, my Lord Duke, your Grace hardly would wish,
To cumber your house, such a kettle of fish.
Had your order related to night-caps or hose,
Or mittens of worsted, there's plenty of those.
Or would you be pleased but to fancy a whale?
And direct me to send it—by sea or by mail?
The season, I'm told, is nigh over, but still
I could get you one fit for the lake at Bowhill.
Indeed, as to whales, there's no need to be thrifty,
Since one day last fortnight two hundred and fifty,
Pursued by seven Orkneymen's boats and no more,
Betwixt Truffness and Luffness were drawn on the shore!
You'll ask if I saw this same wonderful sight;
I own that I did not, but easily might—
For this mighty shoal of leviathans lay
On our lee-beam a mile, in the loop of the bay,
And the islesmen of Sanda were all at the spoil,
And *flinching* (so term it) the blubber to boil;
(Ye spirits of lavender, drown the reflection
That awakes at the thoughts of this odorous dissection.)
To see this huge marvel full fain would we go,
But Wilson, the wind, and the current said no.
We have now got to Kirkwall, and needs I must stare
When I think that in verse I have once called it *fair;*
'Tis a base little borough, both dirty and mean—
There is nothing to hear, and there's nought to be seen,
Save a church, where, of old times, a prelate harangued,
And a palace that's built by an earl that was hanged.
But farewell to Kirkwall—aboard we are going,
The anchor's a-peak and the breezes are blowing;
Our commodore calls all his band to their places,
And 'tis time to release you—good night to your Graces!'

'*To His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch*, *etc.*

'GLASGOW, *Sept.* 8, 1814.

'MY DEAR LORD DUKE—I take the earliest opportunity, after landing, to discharge a task so distressing to me, that I find reluctance and fear even in making the attempt, and for the first time address so kind and generous a friend without either comfort and confidence in myself, or the power of offering a single word of consolation to his affliction. I learned the late calamitous news (which indeed no preparation could have greatly mitigated) quite unexpectedly, when upon the Irish coast;

nor could the shock of an earthquake have affected me in the same proportion. Since that time I have been detained at sea, thinking of nothing but what has happened, and of the painful duty I am now to perform. If the deepest interest in this inexpressible loss could qualify me for expressing myself upon a subject so distressing, I know few whose attachment and respect for the lamented object of our sorrows can or ought to exceed my own, for never was more attractive kindness and condescension displayed by one of her sphere, or returned with deeper and more heart-felt gratitude by one in my own. But selfish regret and sorrow, while they claim a painful and unavailing ascendance, cannot drown the recollection of the virtues lost to the world, just when their scene of acting had opened wider, and to her family when the prospect of their speedy entry upon life rendered her precept and example peculiarly important. And such an example! for of all whom I have ever seen, in whatever rank, she possessed most the power of rendering virtue lovely—combining purity of feeling and soundness of judgment with a sweetness and affability which won the affections of all who had the happiness of approaching her. And this is the partner of whom it has been God's pleasure to deprive your Grace, and the friend for whom I now sorrow, and shall sorrow while I can remember anything. The recollection of her excellences can but add bitterness, at least in the first pangs of calamity, yet it is impossible to forbear the topic; it runs to my pen as to my thoughts, till I almost call in question, for an instant, the Eternal Wisdom which has so early summoned her from this wretched world, where pain and grief and sorrow is our portion, to join those to whom her virtues, while upon earth, gave her so strong a resemblance. Would to God I could say, *be comforted;* but I feel every common topic of consolation must be, for the time at least, even an irritation to affliction. Grieve then, my dear Lord, or I should say my dear and much honoured friend, for sorrow for the time levels the highest distinctions of rank; but do not grieve as those who have no hope.

I know the last earthly thoughts of the departed sharer of your joys and sorrows must have been for your Grace and the dear pledges she has left to your care. Do not, for their sake, suffer grief to take that exclusive possession which disclaims care for the living, and is not only useless to the dead, but is what their wishes would have most earnestly deprecated. To time, and to God, whose are both time and eternity, belongs the office of future consolation; it is enough to require from the sufferer under such a dispensation to bear his burthen of sorrow with fortitude, and to resist those feelings which prompt us to believe that that which is galling and grievous is therefore altogether beyond our strength to support. Most bitterly do I regret some levity which I fear must have reached you when your distress was most poignant, and most dearly have I paid for venturing to anticipate the time which is not ours, since I received these deplorable news at the very moment when I was collecting some trifles that I thought might give satisfaction to the person whom I so highly honoured, and who, among her numerous excellences, never failed to seem pleased with what she knew was meant to afford her pleasure.

'But I must break off, and have perhaps already written too much. I learn by a letter from Mrs. Scott, this day received, that your Grace is at Bowhill—in the beginning of next week I will be in the vicinity—and when your Grace can receive me without additional pain, I shall have the honour of waiting upon you.—I remain, with the deepest sympathy, my Lord Duke, your Grace's truly distressed and most grateful servant,

'WALTER SCOTT.'

The following letter was addressed to Scott by the Duke of Buccleuch, before he received that which the Poet penned on landing at Glasgow. I present it here, because it will give a more exact notion of what Scott's relations with his noble patron really were, than any other single document which I could produce: and to set that matter in its just light, is essential to the business of this narrative. But I am not ashamed to confess that I embrace with satisfaction the opportunity of thus offering to the readers of the present time a most instructive lesson. They will here see what pure and simple virtues and humble piety may be cultivated as the only sources of real comfort in this world and consolation in the prospect of futurity,—among circles which the giddy and envious mob are apt to regard as intoxicated with the pomps and vanities of wealth and rank; which so many of our popular writers represent systematically as sunk in selfish indulgence—as viewing all below them with apathy and indifference—and last, not least, as upholding, when they do uphold, the religious institutions of their country, merely because they have been taught to believe that their own hereditary privileges and possessions derive security from the prevalence of Christian maxims and feelings among the mass of the people.

'*To Walter Scott, Esq., Post Office, Greenock.*

'Bowhill, *Sept.* 3, 1814.

'My dear Sir—It is not with the view of distressing you with my griefs, in order to relieve my own feelings, that I address you at this moment. But knowing your attachment to myself, and more particularly the real affection which you bore to my poor wife, I thought that a few lines from me would be acceptable, both to explain the state of my mind at present, and to mention a few circumstances connected with that melancholy event.

'I am calm and resigned. The blow was so severe that it stunned me, and I did not feel that agony of mind which might have been expected. I now see the full extent of my misfortune; but that extended view of it has come gradually upon me. I am fully aware how imperative it is upon me to exert myself to the utmost on account of my children. I must not depress their spirits by a display of my own melancholy feelings. I have many new duties to perform,—or rather, perhaps, I now feel more pressingly the obligation of duties which the unceasing exertions of my poor wife rendered less necessary, or induced me to attend to with less than sufficient accuracy. I have been taught a severe lesson; it may and ought to be a useful one. I feel that my lot, though a hard one, is accompanied by many alleviations denied to others. I have a numerous family, thank God, in health, and profiting, according to their different ages, by the admirable lessons they have been taught. My daughter, Anne, worthy of so excellent a mother, exerts herself to the utmost to supply her place, and has displayed a fortitude and strength of mind beyond her years, and (as I had foolishly thought) beyond her powers. I have most kind friends willing and ready to afford me every assistance. These are my worldly comforts, and they are numerous and great.

'Painful as it may be, I cannot reconcile it to myself to be totally silent as to the last scene of this cruel tragedy. As she had lived, so she died—an example of every noble feeling—of love, attachment, and the total want of everything selfish. Endeavouring to the last to conceal her suffering, she evinced a fortitude, a resignation, a Christian courage, beyond all power of description. Her last injunction was to attend to her poor people. It was a dreadful but instructive moment. I have learned that the most truly heroic spirit may be lodged in the tenderest and the gentlest breast. Need I tell *you* that she expired in the full hope and expectation, nay, in the firmest certainty, of passing to a better world, through a steady reliance on her Saviour. If ever there was a proof of the efficacy of our religion in moments of the deepest affliction, and in the hour of death, it was exemplified in her conduct. But I will no longer dwell upon a subject which must be painful to you. Knowing her sincere friendship for you, I have thought it would give you pleasure, though a melancholy one, to hear from me that her last moments were such as to be envied by every lover of virtue, piety, and true and genuine religion.

'I will endeavour to do in all things what I know she would wish. I have therefore determined to lay myself open to all the comforts my friends can afford me. I shall be most happy to cultivate their society as heretofore. I shall love them more and more, because I know they loved her. Whenever it suits your convenience I shall be happy to see you here. I feel that it is particularly my duty not to make my house the house of mourning to my children; for I know it was *her* decided opinion that it is most mischievous to give an early impression of gloom to the mind.

'You will find me tranquil, and capable of going through the common occupations of society. Adieu for the present.—Yours very sincerely,

'Buccleuch, etc.'

'*To His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch, etc. etc. etc.*

'Edinburgh, 11*th Sept.* 1814.

'My dear Lord Duke—I received your letter (which had missed me at Greenock) upon its being returned to this place, and cannot sufficiently express my gratitude for the kindness which, at such a moment, could undertake the task of writing upon such a subject to relieve the feelings of a friend. Depend upon it, I am so far worthy of your Grace's kindness, that, among many proofs of it, this affecting and most distressing one can never be forgotten. It gives me great though melancholy satisfaction to find that your Grace has had the manly and Christian fortitude to adopt that resigned and patient frame of spirit, which can extract from the most bitter calamity a wholesome mental medicine. I trust in God that, as so many and such high duties are attached to your station, and as He has blessed you with the disposition that draws pleasure from the discharge of them, your Grace will find your first exertions, however painful, rewarded with strength to persevere, and finally with that comfort which attends perseverance in that which is right. The happiness of hundreds depends upon your Grace almost directly, and the effect of your example in the country, and of your constancy in support of a constitution daily undermined by the wicked and designing, is almost incalculable. Justly, then, and well, has your Grace resolved to sacrifice all that is selfish in the indulgence of grief, to the duties of your social and public situation. Long may you have health and strength to be to your dear and hopeful family an example and guide in all that becomes their high rank. It is enough that one light, and alas, what a light that was! has been recalled by the Divine Will to another and a better sphere.

'I wrote a hasty and unconnected letter immediately on landing. I am detained for two days in this place, but shall wait upon your Grace immediately on my return to Abbotsford. If my society cannot, in the circumstances, give much pleasure, it will, I trust, impose no restraint.

'Mrs. Scott desires me to offer her deepest sympathy upon this calamitous occasion. She has much reason, for she has lost the countenance of a friend such as she cannot expect the course of human life again to supply.—I am ever, with much and affectionate respect, your Grace's truly faithful humble servant, WALTER SCOTT.'

'*To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., M.P., Worthing.*

'EDINBURGH, *September* 14, 1814.

'MY DEAR MORRITT—"At the end of my tour on the 22nd August"!!! Lord help us!—this comes of going to the Levant and the Hellespont, and your Euxine, and so forth. A poor devil who goes to Nova Zembla and Thule is treated as if he had been only walking as far as Barnard Castle or Cauldshiels Loch.[1] I would have you to know I only returned on the 10th current, and the most agreeable thing I found was your letter. I am sure you must know I had need of something pleasant, for the news of the death of the beautiful, the kind, the affectionate, and generous Duchess of Buccleuch gave me a shock, which, to speak God's truth, could not have been exceeded unless by my own family's sustaining a similar deprivation. She was indeed a light set upon a hill, and had all the grace which the most accomplished manners and the most affable address could give to those virtues by which she was raised still higher than by rank. As she always distinguished me by her regard and confidence, and as I had many opportunities of seeing her in the active discharge of duties in which she rather resembled a descended angel than an earthly being, you will excuse my saying so much about my own feelings on an occasion where sorrow has been universal. But I will drop the subject. The survivor has displayed a strength and firmness of mind seldom equalled, where the affection has been so strong and mutual, and amidst the very high station and commanding fortune which so often render self-control more difficult, because so far from being habitual. I trust, for his own sake, as well as for that of thousands to whom his life is directly essential, and hundreds of thousands to whom his example is important, that God, as he has given him fortitude to bear this inexpressible shock, will add strength of constitution to support him in the struggle. He has written to me on the occasion in a style becoming a man and a Christian, submissive to the will of God, and willing to avail himself of the consolations which remain among his family and friends. I am going to see him, and how we shall meet, God knows; but though "an iron man of iron mould" upon many of the occasions of life in which I see people most affected, and a peculiar contemner

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[1] Lord Byron writes to Mr. Moore, August 3, 1814—'Oh! I have had the most amusing letter from Hogg, the Ettrick Minstrel and Shepherd. I think very highly of him as a poet, but he and half of these Scotch and Lake troubadours are spoilt by living in little circles and petty coteries. London and the world is the only place to take the conceit out of a man—in the milling phrase. Scott, he says, is gone to the Orkneys in a gale of wind, during which wind, he affirms, the said Scott, he is sure, is not at his ease, to say the least of it. Lord! Lord! if these home-keeping minstrels had crossed your Atlantic or my Mediterranean, and tasted a little open boating in a white squall—or a gale in "the Gut,"—or the bay of Biscay, with no gale at all—how it would enliven and introduce them to a few of the sensations!—to

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say nothing of an illicit amour or two upon shore, in the way of Essay upon the Passions, beginning with simple adultery, and compounding it as they went along.'—Life and Works, vol. iii. p. 102. Lord Byron, by the way, had written on July the 24th to Mr. Murray, 'Waverley is the best and most interesting novel I have redde since—I don't know when,' etc.—Ibid. p. 98.

of the commonplace sorrow which I see paid to the departed, this is a case in which my stoicism will not serve me. They both gave me reason to think they loved me, and I returned their regard with the most sincere attachment—the distinction of rank being, I think, set apart on all sides. But God's will be done. I will dwell no longer upon this subject. It is much to learn that Mrs. Morritt is so much better, and that if I have sustained a severe wound from a quarter so little expected, I may promise myself the happiness of your dear wife's recovery.

'I will shortly mention the train of our voyage, reserving particulars till another day. We sailed from Leith, and skirted the Scottish coast, visiting the Buller of Buchan and other remarkable objects—went to Shetland—thence to Orkney—from thence round Cape Wrath to the Hebrides, making descents everywhere, where there was anything to be seen—thence to Lewis and the Long Island—to Skye—to Iona—and so forth, lingering among the Hebrides as long as we could. Then we stood over to the coast of Ireland, and visited the Giant's Causeway and Port Rush, where Dr. Richardson, the inventor (discoverer, I would say) of the celebrated fiorin-grass, resides. By the way, he is a chattering charlatan, and his fiorin a mere humbug. But if he were Cicero, and his invention were potatoes, or anything equally useful, I should detest the recollection of the place and the man, for it was there I learned the death of my friend. Adieu, my dear Morritt; kind compliments to your lady; like poor Tom, "I cannot daub it farther." When I hear where you are, and what you are doing, I will write you a more cheerful epistle. Poor Mackenzie, too, is gone—the brother of our friend Lady Hood—and another Mackenzie, son to the Man of Feeling. So short time have I been absent, and such has been the harvest of mortality among those whom I regarded!

'I will attend to your corrections in Waverley. My principal employment for the autumn will be reducing the knowledge I have acquired of the localities of the islands into scenery and stage-room for the "Lord of the Isles," of which renowned romance I think I have repeated some portions to you. It was elder born than Rokeby, though it gave place to it in publishing.

'After all, scribbling is an odd propensity. I don't believe there is any ointment, even that of the Edinburgh Review, which can cure the infected.—Once more yours entirely, WALTER SCOTT.'

Before I pass from the event which made August 1814 so black a month in Scott's calendar, I may be excused for once more noticing the kind interest which the Duchess of Buccleuch had always taken in the fortunes of the Ettrick Shepherd, and introducing a most characteristic epistle which she received from him a few months before her death. The Duchess—'fearful' (as she said) 'of seeing herself in print'—did not answer the Shepherd, but forwarded his letter to Scott, begging him to explain that circumstances did not allow the Duke to concede what he requested, but to assure him that they both retained a strong wish to serve him whenever a suitable opportunity should present itself. Hogg's letter was as follows:—

'*To Her Grace the Duchess of Buccleuch, Dalkeith Palace. Favoured by Messrs. Grieve and Scott, hatters, Edinburgh.*[1]

'ETTRICKBANK, *March* 17, 1814.

'MAY IT PLEASE YOUR GRACE—I have often grieved you by my applications for this and that. I am sensible of this, for I have had many instances of your wishes to be of service to me, could you have known what to do for that purpose. But there are some eccentric characters in the world, of whom no person can judge or know what will prove beneficial, or what may prove their bane. I have again and again received of your Grace's private bounty, and though it made me love and respect you the more, I was nevertheless grieved at it. It was never your

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[1] Mr. Grieve was a man of cultivated mind and generous disposition, and a most kind and zealous friend of the Shepherd.

Grace's money that I wanted, but the honour of your countenance; indeed my heart could never yield to the hope of being patronised by any house save that of Buccleuch, whom I deemed bound to cherish every plant that indicated anything out of the common way on the Braes of Ettrick and Yarrow.

'I know you will be thinking that this long preclude is to end with a request. No, Madam! I have taken the resolution of never making another request. I will, however, tell you a story, which is, I believe, founded on a fact:—

'There is a small farm at the head of a water called * * * *, possessed by a mean fellow named * * * *. A third of it has been taken off and laid into another farm—the remainder is as yet unappropriated. Now, there is a certain poor bard, who has two old parents, each of them upwards of eighty-four years of age; and that bard has no house nor home to shelter those poor parents in, or cheer the evening of their lives. A single line from a certain very great and very beautiful lady to a certain Mr. Riddle[1] would ensure that small pendicle to the bard at once. But she will grant no such thing! I appeal to your Grace if she is not a very bad lady that?—I am your Grace's ever obliged and grateful

'JAMES HOGG, THE ETTRICK SHEPHERD.'

Though the Duke of Buccleuch would not dismiss a poor tenant merely because Hogg called him 'a mean fellow,' he had told Scott that if he could find an unappropriated 'pendicle,' such as this letter referred to, he would most willingly bestow it on the Shepherd. It so happened that when Scott paid his first visit at Bowhill after the death of the Duchess, the Ettrick Shepherd was mentioned:—'My friend,' said the Duke, 'I must now consider this poor man's case as *her* legacy'; and to this feeling Hogg owed, very soon afterwards, his establishment at Altrive, on his favourite Braes of Yarrow.

As Scott passed through Edinburgh on his return from his voyage, the negotiation as to the Lord of the Isles, which had been protracted through several months, was completed—Constable agreeing to give fifteen hundred guineas for one half of the copyright, while the other moiety was retained by the author. The sum mentioned had been offered by Constable at an early stage of the affair, but it was not until now accepted, in consequence of the earnest wish of Scott and Ballantyne to saddle the publisher of the new poem with part of their old 'quire stock,'—which, however, Constable ultimately persisted in refusing. It may easily be believed that John Ballantyne's management of money matters during Scott's six weeks' absence had been such as to render it doubly convenient for the Poet to have this matter settled on his arrival in Edinburgh—and it may also be supposed that the progress of Waverley during that interval had tended to put the chief parties in good-humour with each other.

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[1] Major Riddell, the Duke's Chamberlain at Branksome Castle.

In returning to Waverley, I must observe most distinctly that nothing can be more unfounded than the statement which has of late years been frequently repeated in memoirs of Scott's life, that the sale of the first edition of this immortal Tale was slow. It appeared on the 7th of July, and the whole impression (1000 copies) had disappeared within five weeks; an occurrence then unprecedented in the case of an anonymous novel, put forth, at what is called among publishers, *the dead season.* A second edition, of 2000 copies, was at least projected by the 24th of the same month,[1]—that appeared before the end of August, and it too had gone off so rapidly, that when Scott passed through Edinburgh, on his way from the Hebrides, he found Constable eager to treat, on the same terms as before, for a third of 1000 copies. This third edition was published in October, and when a fourth of the like extent was called for in November, I find Scott writing to John Ballantyne—'I suppose Constable won't quarrel with a work on which he has netted £612 in four months, with a certainty of making it £1000 before the year is out'; and, in fact, owing to the diminished expense of advertising, the profits of this fourth edition were to each party £440. To avoid recurring to these details, I may as well state at once that a fifth edition of 1000 copies appeared in January 1815; a sixth of 1500 in June 1816; a seventh of 2000 in October 1817; an eighth of 2000 in April 1821; that in the collective editions, prior to 1829, 11,000 were disposed of; and that the sale of the current edition, with notes, begun in 1829, has already reached 40,000 copies. Well might Constable regret that he had not ventured to offer £1000 for the whole copyright of Waverley!

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[1] See letter to Mr. Morritt, *ante*, p. 335.

I must now look back for a moment to the history of the composition.—The letter of September 1810 was not the only piece of discouragement which Scott had received, during the progress of Waverley, from his first confidant. James Ballantyne, in his deathbed *memorandum*, says—'When Mr. Scott first questioned me as to my hopes of him as a novelist, it somehow or other did chance that they were not very high. He saw this, and said—"Well, I don't see why I should not succeed as well as other people. At all events, faint heart never won fair lady—'tis only trying." When the first volume was completed, I still could not get myself to think much of the Waverley-Honour scenes; and in this I afterwards found that I sympathized with many. But, to my utter shame be it spoken, when I reached the exquisite descriptions of scenes and manners at Tully-Veolan, what did I do but pronounce them at once to be utterly vulgar! When the success of the work so entirely knocked me down as a man of taste, all that the good-natured author said was—"Well, I really thought you were wrong about the Scotch. Why, Burns, by his poetry, had already attracted universal attention to everything Scottish, and I confess I couldn't see why I should not be able to keep the flame alive, merely because I wrote Scotch in prose, and he in rhyme."'—It is, I think, very agreeable to have this manly avowal to compare with the delicate allusion which Scott makes to the affair in his Preface to the Novel.

The only other friends originally intrusted with his secret appear to have been Mr. Erskine and Mr. Morritt. I know not at what stage the former altered the opinion which he formed on seeing the tiny fragment of 1805. The latter did not, as we have seen, receive the book until it was completed; but he anticipated, before he closed the first volume, the station which public opinion would ultimately assign to Waverley. 'How the story may continue,' Mr. Morritt then wrote, 'I am not able to divine; but, as far as I have read, pray let us thank you for the Castle of Tully-Veolan, and the delightful drinking-bout at Lucky Mac-Leary's, for the characters of the Laird of Balmawhapple and the Baron of Bradwardine; and no less for Davie Gelatly, whom I take to be a transcript of William Rose's motley follower, commonly yclept Caliban.[1] If the completion be equal to what we have just devoured, it deserves a place among our standard works far better than its modest appearance and anonymous title-page will at first gain it in these days of prolific story-telling. Your manner of narrating is so different from the slipshod sauntering verbiage of common novels, and from the stiff, precise, and prim sententiousness of some of our female moralists, that I think it can't fail to strike anybody who knows what style means; but, amongst the gentle class, who swallow every blue-backed book in a circulating library for the sake of the story, I should fear half the knowledge of nature it contains, and all the real humour, may be thrown away. Sir Everard, Mrs. Rachael, and the Baron, are, I think, in the first ranks of portraits for nature and character; and I could depone to their likeness in any court of taste. The ballad of St. Swithin, and scraps of *old songs*, were measures of danger if you meant to continue your concealment; but, in truth, you wear your disguise something after the manner of Bottom the weaver; and in spite of you the truth will soon peep out.' And next day he resumes,—'We have finished Waverley, and were I to tell you all my admiration, you would accuse me of complimenting. You have quite attained the point which your *postscript-preface* mentions as your object—the discrimination of Scottish character, which had hitherto been slurred over with clumsy national daubing.' He adds, a week or two later,—'After all, I need not much thank you for your confidence. How could you have hoped that I should not discover you? I had heard you tell half the anecdotes before—some turns you owe to myself; and no doubt most of your friends must have the same sort of thing to say.'

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[1] This alludes to some mummery in which David Hinves, of merry memory, wore a Caliban-like disguise. He lived more than forty years in the service of Mr. W. S. Rose, and died in it last year. Mr. Rose was of course extremely young when he first picked up Hinves—a bookbinder by trade, and a preacher among the Methodists. A sermon heard casually under a tree in the New Forest, had such touches of good feeling and broad humour, that the young gentleman promoted him to be his valet on the spot. He was treated latterly more like a friend than a servant, by his master, and by all his master's intimate friends. Scott presented him with a copy of all his works; and Coleridge gave him a corrected (or rather an altered) copy of Christabelle, with this inscription on the fly-leaf: 'Dear Hinves,—Till this book is concluded, and with it "Gundimore, a poem, by the same author," accept of this *corrected* copy of Christabelle as a *small* token of regard; yet such a testimonial as I would not pay to any one I did not esteem, though he were an emperor. Be assured I shall send you for your private library, every work I have published (if there be any to be had) and whatever I shall publish. Keep steady to the FAITH. If the fountainhead be always full, the stream cannot be long empty.—Yours sincerely, S. T. Coleridge.

'*11th Nov.* 1816—Muddeford.'

Mr. Rose imagines that the warning 'keep steady to the faith' was given in allusion to Ugo Foscolo's 'supposed licence in religious opinions.'—*Rhymes* (Brighton, 1837), p. 92.—[1839.]

Monk Lewis's letter on the subject is so short, that I must give it as it stands:—

'*To Walter Scott, Esq., Abbotsford.*

'THE ALBANY, *Aug.* 17, 1814.

'MY DEAR SCOTT—I return some books of yours which you lent me "*sixty years since*"—and I hope they will reach you safe. I write in great haste; and yet I must mention, that hearing "Waverley" ascribed to you, I bought it, and read it with all impatience. I am now told it is not yours, but William Erskine's. If this is so, pray tell him from me that I think it excellent in every respect, and that I believe every word of it.—Ever yours,

'M. G. Lewis.'

Another friend (and he had, I think, none more dear), the late Margaret Maclean Clephane of Torloisk, afterwards Marchioness of Northampton, writes thus from Kirkness, in Kinross-shire, on the 11th October:—'In this place I feel a sort of pleasure, not unallied to pain, from the many recollections that every venerable tree, and every sunny bank, and every honeysuckle bower, occasions; and I have found something here that speaks to me in the voice of a valued friend—*Waverley*. The question that rises, it is perhaps improper to give utterance to. If so, let it pass as an exclamation.—Is it possible that Mr. Erskine can have written it? The poetry, I think, would prove a different descent in any court in Christendom. The turn of the phrases in many places is so peculiarly yours, that I fancy I hear your voice repeating them; and there wants but verse to make all Waverley an enchanting poem—varying to be sure from grave to gay, but with so deepening an interest as to leave an impression on the mind that few—very few poems—could awaken. But, why did not the author allow me to be his Gaelic Dragoman? Oh! Mr. ——, whoever you are, you might have safely trusted M. M. C.'

There was one person with whom it would, of course, have been more than vain to affect any concealment. On the publication of the third edition, I find him writing thus to his brother Thomas, who had by this time gone to Canada as paymaster of the 70th regiment:—'Dear Tom, a novel here, called Waverley, has had enormous success. I sent you a copy, and will send you another, with the Lord of the Isles, which will be out at Christmas. The success which it has had, with some other circumstances, has induced people

To lay the bantling at a certain door,
Where lying store of faults, they'd fain heap more.

You will guess for yourself how far such a report has credibility; but by no means give the weight of your opinion to the Transatlantic public; for you must know there is also a counter-report, that *you* have written the said Waverley. Send me a novel intermixing your exuberant and natural humour, with any incidents and descriptions of scenery you may see—particularly with characters and traits of manners. I will give it all the cobbling that is necessary, and, if you do but exert yourself, I have not the least doubt it will be worth £500; and, to encourage you, you may, when you send the MS., draw on me for £100, at fifty days' sight—so that your labours will at any rate not be quite thrown away. You have more fun and descriptive talent than most people; and all that you want—*i.e.* the mere practice of composition—I can supply, or the devil's in it. Keep this matter a dead secret, and look knowing when Waverley is spoken of. If you are not Sir John Falstaff, you are as good a man as he, and may therefore face Colville of the Dale. You may believe I don't want to make you the author of a book you have never seen; but if people will, upon their own judgment, suppose so, and also on their own judgment give you £500 to try your hand on a novel, I don't see that you are a pin's-point the worse. Mind that your MS. attends the draft. I am perfectly serious and confident, that in two or three months you might clear the cobs. I beg my compliments to the hero who is afraid of Jeffrey's scalping-knife.'

In truth, no one of Scott's intimate friends ever had, or could have had, the slightest doubt as to the parentage of Waverley: nor, although he abstained from communicating the fact formally to most of them, did he ever affect any real concealment in the case of such persons; nor, when any circumstance arose which rendered the withholding of direct confidence on the subject incompatible with perfect freedom of feeling on both sides, did he hesitate to make the avowal.

Nor do I believe that the mystification ever answered much purpose, among literary men of eminence beyond the circle of his personal acquaintance. But it would be difficult to suppose that he had ever wished that to be otherwise; it was sufficient for him to set the mob of readers at gaze, and above all, to escape the annoyance of having productions, actually known to be his, made the daily and hourly topics of discussion in his presence.

Mr. Jeffrey had known Scott from his youth—and, in reviewing Waverley, he was at no pains to conceal his conviction of its authorship. He quarrelled, as usual, with carelessness of style, and some inartificialities of plot, but rendered justice to the substantial merits of the work, in language which I shall not mar by abridgment. The Quarterly was far less favourable in its verdict. Indeed, the articles on Waverley, and afterwards on Guy Mannering, which appeared in that journal, will bear the test of ultimate opinion as badly as any critical pieces which our time has produced. They are written in a captious, cavilling strain of quibble, which shows as complete blindness to the essential interest of the narrative, as the critic betrays on the subject of the Scottish dialogue, which forms its liveliest ornament, when he pronounces that to be 'a dark dialogue of Anglified Erse.' With this remarkable exception, the professional critics were, on the whole, not slow to confess their belief, that, under a hackneyed name and trivial form, there had at last appeared a work of original creative genius, worthy of being placed by the side of the very few real masterpieces of prose fiction. Loftier romance was never blended with easier, quainter humour, by Cervantes himself. In his familiar delineations, he had combined the strength of Smollett with the native elegance and unaffected pathos of Goldsmith; in his darker scenes, he had revived that real tragedy which appeared to have left our stage with the age of Shakspeare; and elements of interest so diverse had been blended and interwoven with that nameless grace, which, more surely perhaps than even the highest perfection in the command of any one strain of sentiment, marks the master-mind cast in Nature's most felicitous mould.

Scott, with the consciousness (avowed long afterwards in his General Preface) that he should never in all likelihood have thought of a Scotch novel had he not read Maria Edgeworth's exquisite pieces of Irish character, desired James Ballantyne to send her a copy of Waverley on its first appearance, inscribed 'from the author.' Miss Edgeworth, whom Scott had never then seen, though some literary correspondence had passed between them, thanked the nameless novelist, under cover to Ballantyne, with the cordial generosity of kindred genius; and the following answer, not from Scott, but from Ballantyne—(who had kept a copy, now before me)—is not to be omitted :—

'*To Miss Edgeworth, Edgeworthstown, Ireland.*

'EDINBURGH, 11*th November* 1814.

'MADAM—I am desired by the Author of Waverley to acknowledge, in his name, the honour you have done him by your most flattering approbation of his work—a distinction which he receives as one of the highest that could be paid him, and which he would have been proud to have himself stated his sense of, only that being *impersonal*, he thought it more respectful to require my assistance than to write an anonymous letter.

'There are very few who have had the opportunities that have been presented to me, of knowing how very elevated is the admiration entertained by the Author o Waverley for the genius of Miss Edgeworth. From the intercourse that took place betwixt us while the work was going through my press, *I know* that the exquisite truth and power of your characters operated on his mind a once to excite and subdue it. He felt that the success o his book was to depend upon the characters, much more than upon the story; and he entertained so just and so high an opinion of your eminence in the management o both, as to have strong apprehensions of any comparison which might be instituted betwixt his picture and story and yours; besides, that there is a richness and *naïveté* in Irish character and humour, in which the Scotch are certainly defective, and which could hardly fail, as he thought, to render his delineations cold and tame by the contrast. "If I could but hit Miss Edgeworth's wonderful power of vivifying all her persons, and making them live as *beings* in your mind, I should not be afraid":—Often has the Author of Waverley used such language to me; and I knew that I gratified him most when I could say,—"Positively this *is* equal to Miss Edgeworth." You will thus judge, Madam, how deeply he must feel such praise as you have bestowed upon his efforts. I believe he himself thinks the Baron the best drawn character in his book—I mean the Bailie—honest Bailie Macwheeble. He protests it is the most *true*, though from many causes he did not expect it to be the most popular. It appears to me, that amongst so many splendid portraits, all drawn with such strength and truth, it is more easy to say which is your favourite, than which is best. Mr. Henry Mackenzie agrees with you in your objection to the resemblance to Fielding. He says, you should never be forced to recollect, *maugre* all its internal evidence to the contrary, that such a work is a work of fiction, and all its fine creations but of air. The character of Rose is less finished than the author had at one period intended; but I believe the characters of humour grew upon his liking, to the prejudice, in some degree, of those of a more elevated and sentimental kind. Yet what can surpass Flora, and her gallant brother?

'I am not authorized to say—but I will not resist my impulse to say to Miss Edgeworth, that another novel, descriptive of more ancient manners still, may be expected ere long from the Author of Waverley. But I request her to observe, that I say this in strict confidence—not certainly meaning to exclude from the knowledge of what will give them pleasure, her respectable family.

'Mr. Scott's poem, the Lord of the Isles, promises fully to equal the most admired of his productions. It is, I think, equally powerful, and certainly more unifo polished and sustained. I have seen three cantos. I consist of six.

'I have the honour to be, Madam, with the ut admiration and respect, your most obedient and humble servant, JAMES BALLANTYN

CHAPTER XXXIV

Progress of the Lord of the Isles—Correspondence with Mr. Joseph Train—Rapid completion of the Lord of the Isles—'Six Weeks at Christmas'—'Refreshing the Machine'—Publication of the Poem—and of Guy Mannering—Letters to Morritt, Terry, and John Ballantyne—Anecdotes by James Ballantyne—Visit to London—Meeting with Lord Byron—Dinners at Carlton House.

1814–1815

By the 11th of November, then, the Lord of the Isles had made great progress, and Scott had also authorized Ballantyne to negotiate among the booksellers for the publication of a second novel. But before I go further into these transactions, I must introduce the circumstances of Scott's first connexion with an able and amiable man, whose services were of high importance to him, at this time and ever after, in the prosecution of his literary labours. Calling at Ballantyne's printing-office while Waverley was in the press, he happened to take up a proof-sheet of a volume, entitled 'Poems, with notes illustrative of traditions in Galloway and Ayrshire, by Joseph Train, Supervisor of Excise at Newton-Stewart.' The sheet contained a ballad on an Ayrshire tradition, about a certain 'Witch of Carrick,' whose skill in the black art was, it seems, instrumental in the destruction of one of the scattered vessels of the Spanish Armada. The ballad begins:—

Why gallops the palfrey with Lady Du
Who drives away Turnberry's kine fro
Go tell it in Carrick, and tell it in Ky
Although the proud Dons are now pass
On this magic clew,
That in fairyland grew,
Old Elcine de Aggart has taken in han
To wind up their lives ere they win to

Scott immediately wrote to the autho
included in his list of subscribers for a
suggesting at the same time a verbal
of the stanzas of this ballad. Mr. Tr
his letter with gratitude, and the little
just as he was about to embark in the
He took it with him on his voyage,
home again, wrote to Mr. Train, expres
tion he had received from several of h
but still more from his notes, and requ
seemed to be enthusiastic about traditio
communicate any matters of that ord
Galloway which he might not himself th
account; 'for,' said Scott, 'nothing int
as local anecdotes; and, as the applic
usually conclude, the smallest donation
accepted.'

Mr. Train, in a little narrative w
favoured me, says that for some years
he had been engaged, in alliance with
Mr. Denniston, in collecting materials
Galloway; they had circulated lists
the clergy and parish schoolmasters, a
by their own personal researches, acc
variety of the most excellent materials
but that, from the hour of his correspon
Scott, he 'renounced every idea of autho
resolving, 'that thenceforth his chief
collecting whatever he thought would b
to *him*'; and that Mr. Denniston was
acquiesce in the abandonment of thei

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[1] The Mull of Cantyre.

'Upon receiving Mr. Scott's letter,' says Mr. Train, 'I became still more zealous in the pursuit of ancient lore, and being the first person who had attempted to collect old stories in that quarter with any view to publication, I became so noted, that even beggars, in the hope of reward, came frequently from afar to Newton-Stewart, to recite old ballads and relate old stories to me.' Erelong, Mr. Train visited Scott both at Edinburgh and at Abbotsford; a true affection continued ever afterwards to be maintained between them; and this generous ally was, as the prefaces to the Waverley Novels signify, one of the earliest confidants of that series of works, and certainly the most efficient of all the author's friends in furnishing him with materials for their composition. Nor did he confine himself to literary services: whatever portable object of antiquarian curiosity met his eye, this good man secured and treasured up with the same destination; and if ever a catalogue of the museum at Abbotsford shall appear, no single contributor, most assuredly, will fill so large a space in it as Mr. Train.

His first considerable communication, after he had formed the unselfish determination above-mentioned, consisted of a collection of anecdotes concerning the Galloway gypsies, and 'a local story of an astrologer, who calling at a farm-house at the moment when the goodwife was in travail, had, it was said, predicted the future fortune of the child, almost in the words placed in the mouth of John M'Kinlay, in the Introduction to Guy Mannering.' Scott told him, in reply, that the story of the astrologer reminded him of 'one he had heard in his youth'; that is to say, as the Introduction explains, from this M'Kinlay; but Mr. Train has, since his friend's death, recovered a rude *Durham* ballad, which in fact contains a great deal more of the main fable of Guy Mannering than either his own written or M'Kinlay's oral edition of the *Gallovidian* anecdote had conveyed; and,—possessing, as I do, numberless evidences of the haste with which Scott drew up his beautiful Prefaces and Introductions of 1829, 1830, and 1831,—I am strongly

inclined to think that he must in his b
the Durham Broadside or Chapbook
heard the old serving-man's Scottish ve

However this may have been, Scot
Train proceeded in these words :—'I a
favour, which I think your interest in S
will induce you readily to comply w
desirous to have some account of th
Turnberry Castle—whether any vestig
what is the appearance of the ground—
neighbouring places—and above all, wha
of the place (if any) concerning its men
Bruce, upon his return from the coast
commencement of the brilliant part of
purpose of this is to furnish some hi
work in which I am now engaged, an
I will have great pleasure in mentionin
which I derive my information. I have
the modest importunity of a lazy corre
sooner you oblige me with an answer (i
on the subject), the greater will the ob
who am already your obliged humble se

The recurrence of the word *Turnb*
of Elcine de Aggart, had of course sugg
tion, which was dated on the 7th of N
often,' says Mr. Train, 'when a boy, c
hills, and traversed the shores of Carric
sufficiently remember the exact places a
which Mr. Scott enquired ; so, immedi
his letter, I made a journey into Ayrs
the information I possibly could, and f
on the 18th of the same month.' Amo
thus communicated was the local su
the anniversary of the night when
Turnberry from Arran, the same met
had attended his voyage reappeared,
same quarter of the heavens. With

Scott was much struck. 'Your information,' he writes on the 22nd November, 'was particularly interesting and acceptable, especially that which relates to the supposed preternatural appearance of the fire, etc., which I hope to make some use of.' What use he did make of it, if any reader has forgotten, will be seen by reference to stanzas 7-17 of the 5th Canto of the Poem; and the notes to the same Canto embody, with due acknowledgment, the more authentic results of Mr. Train's pilgrimage to Carrick.

I shall recur presently to this communication from Mr. Train; but must pause for a moment to introduce two letters, both written in the same week with Scott's request as to the localities of Turnberry. They both give us amusing sketches of his buoyant spirits at this period of gigantic exertion; and the first of them, which relates chiefly to Maturin's Tragedy of Bertram, shows how he could still contrive to steal time for attention to the affairs of brother authors less energetic than himself.

'*To Daniel Terry, Esq.*

'ABBOTSFORD, *November* 10, 1814.

'MY DEAR TERRY—I should have long since answered your kind letter by our friend Young, but he would tell you of my departure with our trusty and well-beloved Erskine, on a sort of a voyage to Nova Zembla. Since my return, I have fallen under the tyrannical dominion of a certain Lord of the Isles. Those Lords were famous for oppression in the days of yore, and if I can judge by the posthumous despotism exercised over me, they have not improved by their demise. The *peine forte et dure* is, you know, nothing in comparison to being obliged to grind verses; and so devilish repulsive is my disposition, that I can never put my wheel into constant and regular motion, till Ballantyne's devil claps in his proofs, like the hot cinder which you Bath folks used to clap in beside an unexperienced turnspit, as a hint to be expeditious in his duty. Oh long life to the old hermit of Prague, who never saw pen and ink—much happier in that negative circumstance than in his alliance with the niece of King Gorboduc.

'To talk upon a blither subject, I wish you saw Abbotsford, which begins this season to look the whimsical, gay, odd cabin that we had chalked out. I have been obliged to relinquish Stark's plan, which was greatly too expensive. So I have made the old farmhouse my *corps de logis*, with some outlying places for kitchen, laundry, and two spare bedrooms, which run along the east wall of the farm-court, not without some picturesque effect. A perforated cross, the spoils of the old kirk of Galashiels, decorates an advanced door, and looks very well. This little sly bit of sacrilege has given our spare rooms the name of *the chapel.* I earnestly invite you to a *pew* there, which you will find as commodious for the purpose of a nap as you have ever experienced when, under the guidance of old Mrs. Smollett, you were led to St. George's, Edinburgh.

'I have been recommending to John Kemble (I daresay without any chance of success) to peruse a MS. Tragedy of Maturin's, author of Montorio: it is one of those things which will either succeed greatly or be damned gloriously, for its merits are marked, deep, and striking, and its faults of a nature obnoxious to ridicule. He had our old friend Satan (none of your sneaking St. John Street devils, but the arch-fiend himself) brought on the stage bodily. I believe I have exorcised the foul fiend—for, though in reading he was a most terrible fellow, I feared for his reception in public. The last act is ill contrived. He piddles (so to speak) through a cullender, and divides the whole horrors of the catastrophe (though God wot there are enough of them) into a kind of drippity-droppity of four or five scenes, instead of inundating the audience with them at once in the finale, with a grand "*gardez l'eau.*" With all this, which I should say had I written the thing myself, it is grand and powerful; the language most animated and poetical; and the characters sketched with a masterly enthusiasm.

Many thanks for Captain Richard Falconer.[1] To your kindness I owe the two books in the world I most longed to see, not so much for their intrinsic merits, as because they bring back with vivid associations the sentiments of my childhood—I might almost say infancy. Nothing ever disturbed my feelings more than when, sitting by the old oak table, my aunt, Lady Raeburn, used to read the lamentable catastrophe of the ship's departing without Captain Falconer, in consequence of the whole party making free with lime-punch on the eve of its being launched. This and Captain Bingfield[2] I much wished to read once more, and I owe the possession of both to your kindness. Everybody that I see talks highly of your steady interest with the public, wherewith, as I never doubted of it, I am pleased but not surprised. We are just now leaving this for the winter: the children went yesterday. Tom Purdie, Finella, and the greyhounds, all in excellent health; the latter have not been hunted this season!!! Can add nothing more to excite your admiration. Mrs. Scott sends her kind compliments.

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[1] 'The Voyages, Dangerous Adventures, and Imminent Escapes of Capt. Rich. Falconer. Containing the Laws, Customs, and Manners of the Indians in America; his shipwrecks; his marrying an Indian wife; his narrow escape from the Island of Dominico, etc. Intermixed with the Voyages and Adventures of Thomas Randal, of Cork, Pilot; with his Shipwreck in the Baltick, being the only man that escap'd. His being taken by the Indians of Virginia, etc. And an Account of his Death. The Fourth Edition. London. Printed for J. Marshall, at the Bible in Gracechurch Street. 1734.'

On the fly-leaf is the following note, in Scott's handwriting:—'This book I read in early youth. I am ignorant whether it is altogether fictitious and written upon De Foe's plan, which it greatly resembles, or whether it is only an exaggerated account of the adventures of a real person. It is very scarce, for, endeavouring to add it to the other favourites of my infancy, I think I looked for it ten years to no purpose, and at last owed it to the active kindness of Mr. Terry. Yet Richard Falconer's adventures seem to have passed through several editions.'

[2] 'The Travels and Adventures of William Bingfield, Esq., containing as surprizing a Fluctuation of Circumstances, both by Sea and Land, as ever befel one man. With an Accurate Account of the Shape, Nature, and Properties of that most furious and amazing Animal, the Dog-Bird. Printed from his own Manuscript. With a beautiful Frontispiece. 2 Vols. 12mo. London:—Printed for E. Withers, at the Seven Stars, in Fleet Street. 1753.' On the fly-leaf of the first volume Scott has written as follows:—'I read this scarce little *Voyage Imaginaire* when I was about ten years old, and long after sought for a copy without being able to find a person who would so much as acknowledge having heard of William Bingfield or his Dog-birds, until the indefatigable kindness of my friend Mr. Terry, of the Hay Market, made me master of this copy. I am therefore induced to think the book is of very rare occurrence.' [In consequence of these Notes, both Falconer and Bingfield have been recently reprinted in London.—1839.]

'W. Scott.'

The following, dated a day after, refers to some lines which Mr. Morritt had sent him from Worthing.

'*To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., M.P., Worthing.*

'Abbotsford, *Nov.* 11, 1814.

'My dear Morritt—I had your kind letter with the beautiful verses. May the muse meet you often on the verge of the sea or among your own woods of Rokeby! May you have spirits to profit by her visits (and that implies all good wishes for the continuance of Mrs. M.'s convalescence), and may I often, by the fruits of your inspiration, have my share of pleasure! My muse is a Tyranness, and not a Christian queen, and compels me to attend to longs and shorts, and I know not what, when, God wot, I had rather be planting evergreens by my new old fountain. You must know that, like the complaint of a fine young boy who was complimented by a stranger on his being a smart fellow, "I am sair halded down by *the bubbly jock.*" In other words, the turkey cock, at the head of a family of some forty or fifty infidels, lays waste all my shrubs. In vain I remonstrate with Charlotte upon these occasions; she is in league with the hen-wife, the natural protectress of these pirates; and I have only the inhuman consolation that I may one day, like a cannibal, eat up my enemies. This is but dull fun, but what else have I to tell you about? It would be worse if, like Justice Shallow's

Davy, I should consult you upon sowing down the headland with wheat. My literary tormentor is a certain Lord of the Isles, famed for his tyranny of yore, and not unjustly. I am bothering some tale of him I have had long by me into a sort of romance. I think you will like it: it is Scottified up to the teeth, and somehow I feel myself like the liberated chiefs of the Rolliad, "who boast their native philabeg restored." I believe the frolics one can cut in this loose garb are all set down by you Sassenachs to the real agility of the wearer, and not the brave, free, and independent character of his clothing. It is, in a word, the real Highland fling, and no one is supposed able to dance it but a native. I always thought that epithet of Gallia *Braccata* implied subjugation, and was never surprised at Cæsar's easy conquests, considering that his Labienus and all his merry men wore, as we say, bottomless breeks.—Ever yours, W. S.'

Well might he describe himself as being hard at work with his Lord of the Isles. The date of Ballantyne's letter to Miss Edgeworth (November 11), in which he mentions the third Canto as completed; that of the communication from Mr. Train (November 18), on which so much of Canto fifth was grounded; and that of a note from Scott to Ballantyne (December 16, 1814), announcing that he had sent the last stanza of the poem: these dates, taken together, afford conclusive evidence of the fiery rapidity with which the three last Cantos of the Lord of the Isles were composed.

He writes, on the 25th December, to Constable that he 'had corrected the last proofs, and was setting out for Abbotsford to refresh the machine.' And in what did his refreshment of the machine consist? Besides having written within this year the greater part (almost, I believe, the whole) of the Life of Swift, Waverley, and the Lord of the Isles, he had given two essays to the Encyclopædia Supplement, and published, with an Introduction and notes, one of the most curious pieces of family history ever produced to the world, on which he laboured with more than usual zeal and diligence, his warm affection for the noble representative c author. This inimitable '*Memorie of the Somer* came out in October; and it was speedily followed annotated reprint of the strange old treatise, ent 'Rowland's letting off the humours of the blood i head vein, 1611.' He had also kept up his p correspondence on a scale which I believe never to been exemplified in the case of any other person wrote continually for the press—except, perhaps, Volt and, to say nothing of strictly professional duties, he as a vast heap of documents now before me pr superintended from day to day, except during Hebridean voyage, the still perplexed concerns of Ballantynes, with a watchful assiduity that might done credit to the most diligent of tradesmen. 'machine' might truly require 'refreshment.'

It was, as has been seen, on the 7th of November Scott acknowledged the receipt of that communic from Mr. Train which included the story of the Gall astrologer. There can be no doubt that this stor called to his mind, if not the Durham ballad, the si but more detailed corruption of it which he had told by his father's servant, John M'Kinlay, in the of George's Square and Green Breeks, and which he preserved in the Introduction to Guy Mannering, a groundwork of that tale. It has been shown that three last Cantos of the Lord of the Isles were wr between the 11th of November and the 25th of Decem and it is therefore scarcely to be supposed that any of this novel had been penned before he thus talke 'refreshing the machine.' It is quite certain that James Ballantyne wrote to Miss Edgeworth on the November he could not have seen one page of Mannering, since he in that letter announces that the novel of his nameless friend would depict manners *ancient* than those of 1745. And yet it is equally ce that before the Lord of the Isles was *published*, w took place on the 18th of January 1815, two volume

Guy Mannering had been not only written and copied by an amanuensis, but printed.

Scott thus writes to Morritt, in sending him his copy of the Lord of the Isles :—

'*To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., M.P., Worthing.*

'EDINBURGH, 19*th January* 1815.

'MY DEAR MORRITT—I have been very foolishly putting off my writing until I should have time for a good long epistle ; and it is astonishing what a number of trifles have interfered to prevent my commencing on a great scale. The last of these has been rather of an extraordinary kind, for your little friend Walter has chose to make himself the town-talk, by taking what seemed to be the small-pox, despite of vaccination in infancy, and inoculation with the variolous matter thereafter, which last I resorted to by way of making assurance double sure. The medical gentleman who attended him is of opinion that he *has* had the real small-pox, but it shall never be averred by me—for the catastrophe of Tom Thumb is enough to deter any thinking person from entering into a feud with the cows. Walter is quite well again, which was the principal matter I was interested in. We had very nearly been in a bad scrape, for I had fixed the Monday on which he sickened, to take him with me for the Christmas vacation to Abbotsford. It is probable that he would not have pleaded headache when there was such a party in view, especially as we were to shoot wild-ducks one day together at Cauldshiels Loch ; and what the consequence of such a journey might have been, God alone knows.

'I am clear of the Lord of the Isles, and I trust you have your copy. It closes my poetic labours upon an extended scale : but I daresay I shall always be dabbling in rhyme until the *solve senescentem*. I have directed the copy to be sent to Portland Place. I want to shake myself free of Waverley, and accordingly have made a considerable exertion to finish an odd little tale within such time as will mystify the public, I trust—unless they suppose me to be Briareus. Two volumes are already printed, and the only persons in my confidence, W. Erskine and Ballantyne, are of opinion that it is much more interesting than Waverley. It is a tale of private life, and only varied by the perilous exploits of smugglers and excisemen. The success of Waverley has given me a spare hundred or two, which I have resolved to spend in London this spring, bringing up Charlotte and Sophia with me. I do not forget my English friends—but I fear they will forget me, unless I show face now and then. My correspondence gradually drops, as must happen when people do not meet; and I long to see Ellis, Heber, Gifford, and one or two more. I do not include Mrs. Morritt and you, because we are much nearer neighbours, and within a whoop and a holla in comparison. I think we should come up by sea, if I were not a little afraid of Charlotte being startled by the March winds—for our vacation begins 12th March.

'You will have heard of poor Caberfae's death? What a pity it is he should have outlived his promising young representative. His state was truly pitiable—all his fine faculties lost in paralytic imbecility, and yet not so entirely so but that he perceived his deprivation as in a glass darkly. Sometimes he was fretful and anxious because he did not see his son; sometimes he expostulated and complained that his boy had been allowed to die without his seeing him; and sometimes, in a less clouded state of intellect, he was sensible of, and lamented his loss in its full extent. These, indeed, are the "fears of the brave and follies of the wise,"[1] which sadden and humiliate the lingering hours of prolonged existence. Our friend Lady Hood will now be Caberfae herself. She has the spirit of a chieftainess in every drop of her blood, but there are few situations in which the cleverest women are so apt to be imposed upon as in the management of landed property, more especially of an Highland estate. I do fear the accomplishment of the prophecy, that when there should be a deaf Caberfae, the house was to fall.[1]

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[1] Johnson's *Vanity of Human Wishes.*

'I am delighted to find Mrs. Morritt is recovering health and strength—better walking on the beach at Worthing than on the *plainstanes* of Prince's Street, for the weather is very severe here indeed. I trust Mrs. M. will, in her milder climate, lay in such a stock of health and strength as may enable you to face the north in Autumn. I have got the nicest crib for you possible, just about twelve feet square, and in the harmonious vicinity of a piggery. You never saw so minute an establishment, —but it has all that we wish for, and all our friends will care about; and we long to see you there. Charlotte sends the kindest remembrances to Mrs. Morritt.

'As for politics, I have thought little about them lately; the high and exciting interest is so completely subsided that the wine is upon the lees. As for America, we have so managed as to give her the appearance of triumph, and what is worse, encouragement to resume the war upon a more favourable opportunity. It was our business to have given them a fearful memento that the babe unborn should have remembered; but, having missed this opportunity, I believe that this country would submit with great reluctance to continue a war, for which there is really no specific object. As for the continental monarchs, there is no guessing what the folly of Kings and Ministers may do; but God knows! would any of them look at home, enough is to be done which might strengthen and improve their dominions in a different manner than by mere extension. I trust Ministers will go out rather than be engaged in war again, upon any account. If France is wise (I have no fear that any superfluous feeling of humanity will stand in the way), she will send 10,000 of her most refractory troops to fight with Christophe and the yellow fever in the Island of St. Domingo, and then I presume they may sit down in quiet at home.

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[1] Francis Lord Seaforth died 11th January 1815, in his 60th year, having outlived four sons all of high promise. His title died with him, and he was succeeded in his estates by his daughter Lady Hood, now the Hon. Mrs. Stewart Mackenzie of Seaforth.—See some verses on Lord Seaforth's death, in Scott's Poetical Works, vol. viii. p. 392, Edit. 1834. The Celtic designation of the chief of the clan MacKenzie, *Caberfae*, means *Staghead*, the bearing of the family. The prophecy which Scott alludes to in this letter, is also mentioned by Sir Humphry Davy in one of his Journals; (see his Life, by Dr. Davy, vol. ii. p. 72)—and it was, if the account be correct, a most extraordinary one, for it connected the fall of the house of Seaforth not only with the appearance of a deaf *Caberfae*, but with the contemporaneous appearance of various different physical misfortunes in several of the other great Highland chiefs; all of which are said — and were certainly believed both by Scott and Davy—to have actually occurred within the memory of the generation that has not yet passed away. Mr. Morritt can testify thus far—that he 'heard the prophecy quoted in the Highlands at a time when Lord Seaforth had two sons both alive and in good health—so that it certainly was not made *après coup*.'

'But my sheet grows to an end, and so does the pleading of the learned counsel, who is thumping the poor bar as I write. He hems twice. Forward, sweet Orator Higgins!—at least till I sign myself, dear Morritt, yours most truly, WALTER SCOTT.'

Guy Mannering was published on the 24th of February—that is, exactly two months after the Lord of the Isles was dismissed from the author's desk; and—making but a narrow allowance for the operations of the transcriber, printer, bookseller, etc., I think the dates I have gathered together, confirm the accuracy of what I have often heard Scott say, that his second novel 'was the work of six weeks at a Christmas.' Such was his recipe 'for refreshing the machine.'

I am sorry to have to add that this severity of labour, like the repetition of it which had such deplorable effects at a later period of his life, was the result of his anxiety to acquit himself of obligations arising out of his connexion with the commercial speculations of the Ballantynes. The approach of Christmas 1814 brought with it the prospect of such a recurrence of difficulties about the discount of John's bills as to render it absolutely necessary that Scott should either apply again for assistance to his private friends, or task his literary powers with some such extravagant effort as has now been recorded. The great object, which was still to get rid of the heavy stock that had been accumulated before the storm of May 1813, at length determined the chief partner to break up, as soon as possible, the concern which his own sanguine rashness, and the gross irregularities of his mercurial lieutenant, had so lamentably perplexed; but Constable, having already enabled the firm to avoid public exposure more than once, was not now, any more than when he made his contract for the Lord of the Isles, disposed to burden himself with an additional load of Weber's 'Beaumont and Fletcher,' and other almost as unsaleable books. While they were still in hopes of overcoming his scruples, it happened that a worthy friend of Scott's, the late Mr. Charles Erskine, his Sheriff-Substitute in Selkirkshire, had immediate occasion for a sum of money which he had some time before advanced, at Scott's personal request, to the firm of John Ballantyne and Company; and on receiving his application, Scott wrote as follows:—

'*To Mr. John Ballantyne, Bookseller, Edinburgh.*

ABBOTSFORD, *Oct.* 14, 1814.

'DEAR JOHN—Charles Erskine wishes his money, as he has made a purchase of land. This is a new perplexity—for paid he must be forthwith—as his advance was friendly and confidential. I do not at this moment see how it is to be raised, but believe I shall find means. In the meanwhile, it will be necessary to propitiate the Leviathans of Paternoster Row. My idea is, that you or James should write to them to the following effect:—That a novel is offered you by the Author of Waverley; that the author is desirous it should be out before Mr. Scott's poem, or as soon thereafter as possible; and that having resolved, as they are aware, to relinquish publishing, you only wish to avail yourselves of this offer to the extent of helping off some of your stock. I leave it to you to consider whether you should condescend on any particular work to offer them as bread to their butter—or on any particular amount—as £500. One thing must be provided, that Constable shares to the extent of the Scottish sale—they, however, managing. My reason for letting them have this scent of roast meat is in case it should be necessary for us to apply to them to renew bills in December.—Yours, W. S.'

Upon receiving this letter, John Ballantyne suggested to Scott that he should be allowed to offer, not only the new novel, but the next edition of Waverley, to Longman, Murray, or Blackwood—in the hope that the prospect of being let in to the profits of the already established favourite, would overcome effectually the hesitation of one or other of these houses about venturing on the encumbrance which Constable seemed to shrink from with such pertinacity; but upon this ingenious proposition Scott at once set his *veto*:—'Dear John,' he writes (Oct. 17, 1814), 'your expedients are all wretched, as far as regards me. I never will give Constable, or any one, room to say I have broken my word with him in the slightest degree. If I lose everything else, I will at least keep my honour unblemished; and I do hold myself bound in honour to offer him a Waverley, while he shall continue to comply with the conditions annexed. I intend the new novel to operate as something more permanent than a mere accommodation; and if I can but be permitted to do so, I will print it before it is sold to any one, and then propose, first to Constable and Longman—second, to Murray and Blackwood—to take the whole at such a rate as will give them one-half of the fair profits; granting acceptances which, upon an edition of 3000, which we shall be quite authorized to print, will amount to an immediate command of £1500; and to this we may couple the condition that they must take £500 or £600 of the old stock. I own I am not solicitous to deal with Constable alone, nor am I at all bound to offer him the new novel on any terms; but he, knowing of the intention, may expect to be treated with at least, although it is possible we may not deal. However, if Murray and Blackwood were to come forward with any handsome proposal as to the stock, I should certainly have no objection to James's giving the pledge of the Author of W. for his next work. You are like the crane in the fable, when you boast of not having got anything from the business; you may thank God that it did not bite your head off. Would to God I were at let-a-be for let-a-be;—but you have done your best, and so must I.—Yours truly, W. S.'

Both Mr. Murray and Longman's partner, Mr. Rees, were in Scotland about this time; and the former at least paid Scott a visit at Abbotsford. Of course, however, whatever propositions they may have made, were received by one or other of the Ballantynes. The result was, that the house of Longman undertook Guy Mannering on the terms dictated by Scott—namely, granting bills for £1500, and relieving John Ballantyne and Company of stock to the extent of £500 more; and Constable's first information of the transaction was from Messrs. Longman themselves, when they, in compliance with Scott's wish, as signified in the letter last quoted, offered him a share in the edition which they had purchased. With one or two exceptions, originating in circumstances nearly similar, the house of Constable published all the subsequent series of the Waverley Novels.

I must not, however, forget that the Lord of the Isles was published a month before Guy Mannering. The poem was received with an interest much heightened by the recent and growing success of the mysterious Waverley. Its appearance, so rapidly following that novel, and accompanied with the announcement of another prose tale, just about to be published, by the same hand, puzzled and confounded the mob of dulness.[1] The more sagacious few said to themselves—Scott is making one serious effort more in his old line, and by this it will be determined

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[1] John Ballantyne put forth the following paragraph in the Scots Magazine of December 1814:—

'Mr. Scott's poem of the Lord of the Isles will appear early in January. The Author of Waverley is about to amuse the public with a new novel, in three volumes, entitled Guy Mannering.'

whether he does or does not altogether renounce that
his new one.

The Edinburgh Review on the Lord of the Isles be
with—

> Here is another genuine Lay of the Great Minstrel, with al
> characteristic faults, beauties, and irregularities. The same glo
> colouring—the same energy of narration—the same amplitu
> description are conspicuous—with the same still more characte
> disdain of puny graces and small originalities—the true poetical
> hood, in the strength of which he urges on his Pegasus fear
> through dense and rare, and aiming gallantly at the great ends of
> and effect, stoops but rarely to study the means by which they
> be attained ; avails himself without scruple of common sentiment
> common images wherever they seem fitted for his purpose ; a
> original by the very boldness of his borrowing, and impressive b
> disregard of epigram and emphasis.

The conclusion of the contemporaneous article in
Quarterly Review is as follows :—

> The many 'beautiful passages which we have extracted from
> poem, combined with the brief remarks subjoined to each canto,
> sufficiently show, that although the Lord of the Isles is not like
> add very much to the reputation of Mr. Scott, yet this must be im
> rather to the greatness of his previous reputation, than to the abs
> inferiority of the poem itself. Unfortunately, its merits are m
> incidental, while its defects are mixed up with the very elemen
> the poem. But it is not in the power of Mr. Scott to write
> tameness ; be the subject what it will (and he could not easily
> chosen one more impracticable), he impresses upon whatever scen
> describes so much movement and activity,—he infuses into
> narrative such a flow of life, and, if we may so express ourselv
> animal spirits, that without satisfying the judgment, or moving
> feelings, or elevating the mind, or even very greatly interesting
> curiosity, he is able to seize upon, and, as it were, exhilarate
> imagination of his readers, in a manner which is often truly unacco
> able. This quality Mr. Scott possesses in an admirable degree ;
> supposing that he had no other object in view than to convince
> world of the great poetical powers with which he is gifted, the p
> before us would be quite sufficient for his purpose. But this
> very inferior importance to the public ; what they want is a
> poem, and, as experience has shown, this can only be constructed
> a solid foundation of taste, and judgment, and meditation.

These passages appear to me to condense the re
of deliberate and candid reflection, and I have theref

quoted them. The most important remarks of either Essayist on the details of the plot and execution are annexed to the last edition of the poem ; and show such an exact coincidence of judgment in two masters of their calling as had not hitherto been exemplified in the professional criticism of his metrical romances. The defects which both point out are, I presume, but too completely explained by the preceding statement of the rapidity with which this, the last of those great performances, had been thrown off ; nor do I see that either Reviewer has failed to do sufficient justice to the beauties which redeem the imperfections of the Lord of the Isles —except as regards the whole character of Bruce, its real hero, and the picture of the Battle of Bannockburn, which, now that one can compare these works from something like the same point of view, does not appear to me in the slightest particular inferior to the Flodden of Marmion.

This poem is now, I believe, about as popular as Rokeby ; but it has never reached the same station in general favour with the Lay, Marmion, or the Lady of the Lake. The first edition of 1800 copies in quarto, was, however, rapidly disposed of, and the separate editions in 8vo, which ensued before his poetical works were collected, amounted together to 12,250 copies. This, in the case of almost any other author, would have been splendid success ; but as compared with what he had previously experienced, even in his Rokeby, and still more so as compared with the enormous circulation at once attained by Lord Byron's early tales, which were then following each other in almost breathless succession, the falling off was decided. One evening, some days after the poem had been published, Scott requested James Ballantyne to call on him, and the Printer found him alone in his library, working at the third volume of Guy Mannering. I give what follows, from Ballantyne's *Memoranda :*

'"Well, James," he said, "I have given you a week —what are people saying about the Lord of the Isles?" I hesitated a little, after the fashion of Gil Blas, but he speedily brought the matter to a point—"Come," he said, "speak out, my good fellow; what has put it into your head to be on so much ceremony *with me* all of a sudden? But, I see how it is, the result is given in one word—*Disappointment*." My silence admitted his inference to the fullest extent. His countenance certainly did look rather blank for a few seconds; in truth, he had been wholly unprepared for the event; for it is a singular fact, that before the public, or rather the booksellers, had given their decision, he no more knew whether he had written well or ill, than whether a die thrown out of a box was to turn up a size or an ace. However, he instantly resumed his spirits, and expressed his wonder rather that his poetical popularity should have lasted so long, than that it should have now at last given way. At length he said, with perfect cheerfulness, "Well, well, James, so be it—but you know we must not droop, for we can't afford to give over. Since one line has failed, we must just stick to something else":—and so he dismissed me and resumed his novel.'

Ballantyne concludes the anecdote in these words:—'He spoke thus, probably unaware of the undiscovered wonders then slumbering in his mind. Yet still he could not but have felt that the production of a few poems was nothing in comparison of what must be in reserve for him, for he was at this time scarcely more than forty.[1] An evening or two after, I called again on him, and found on the table a copy of the Giaour, which he seemed to have been reading. Having an enthusiastic young lady in my house, I asked him if I might carry the book home with me, but chancing to glance on the autograph blazon, "*To the Monarch of Parnassus from one of his subjects*," instantly retracted my request, and said I had not observed Lord Byron's inscription before. "What inscription?" said he; "oh yes, I had forgot, but inscription or no inscription, you are equally welcome." I again took it up, and he continued—"James, Byron hits the mark where I don't even pretend to fledge my arrow." At this time he had never seen Byron, but I knew he meant soon to be in London, when, no doubt, the mighty consummation of the meeting of the two bards would be accomplished; and I ventured to say that he must be looking forward to it with some interest. His countenance became fixed, and he answered impressively, "Oh, of course." In a minute or two afterwards he rose from his chair, paced the room at a very rapid rate, which was his practice in certain moods of mind, then made a dead halt, and bursting into an extravaganza of laughter, "James," cried he, "I'll tell you what Byron should say to me when we are about to accost each other—

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[1] He was not forty-four till August 1815.

'Art thou the man whom men famed Grizzle call?'

And then how germane would be my answer—

'Art thou the still more famed Tom Thumb the small?'"

This,' says the printer, 'is a specimen of his peculiar humour; it kept him full of mirth for the rest of the evening.'

The whole of the scene strikes me as equally and delightfully characteristic; I may add, hardly more so of Scott than of his printer; for Ballantyne, with all his profound worship of his friend and benefactor, was in truth, even more than he, an undoubting acquiescer in 'the decision of the public, or rather of the booksellers'; and among the many absurdities into which his reverence for the popedom of Paternoster Row led him, I never could but consider with special astonishment the facility with which he seemed to have adopted the notion that the Byron of 1814 was really entitled to supplant Scott as a popular poet. Appreciating, as a man of his talents could hardly fail to do, the splendidly original glow and depth of Childe Harold, he always appeared to me quite blind to the fact, that in the Giaour, in the Bride of Abydos, in Parisina, and indeed in all his early serious narratives, Byron owed at least half his success to clever though perhaps unconscious imitation of Scott, and no trivial share of the rest to the lavish use of materials which Scott never employed, only because his genius was, from the beginning to the end of his career, under the guidance of high and chivalrous feelings of moral rectitude. All this Lord Byron himself seems to have felt most completely—as witness the whole sequence of his letters and diaries;[1] and I think I see many symptoms that both the decision of the million, and its index, 'the decision of the booksellers,' tend the same way at present; but my business is to record, as far as my means may permit, the growth and structure of one great mind, and the effect which it produced upon the actual witnesses of its manifestations, not to obtrude the conjectures of a partial individual as to what rank posterity may assign it amongst or above contemporary rivals.

The following letter was addressed to Lord Byron on the receipt of that copy of the Giaour to which Mr. Ballantyne's Memorandum refers: I believe the inscription to Scott first appeared on the ninth edition of the poem.

'*To the Right Hon. Lord Byron, London.*

'MY LORD—I have long owed you my best thanks for the uncommon pleasure I had in perusing your high-spirited Turkish fragment. But I should hardly have ventured to offer them, well knowing how you must be overwhelmed by volunteer intrusions of approbation—(which always look as if the writer valued his opinion at fully more than it may be worth)—unless I had to-day learned that I have an apology for entering upon the subject, from your having so kindly sent me a copy of the poem. I did not receive it sooner, owing to my absence from Edinburgh, where it had been lying quietly at my house in Castle Street; so that I must have seemed ungrateful, when, in truth, I was only modest. The last offence may be forgiven, as not common in a lawyer and poet; the first is said to be equal to the crime of witchcraft, but many an act of my life hath shown that I am no conjurer. If I were, however, ten times more modest than twenty years' attendance at the Bar renders probable, your flattering inscription would cure me of so unfashionable a malady. I might, indeed, lately have had a legal title to as much supremacy on Parnassus as can be conferred by a sign-manual, for I had a very flattering offer of the laurel, but as I felt obliged, for a great many reasons, to decline it, I am altogether unconscious of any other title to sit high upon the forked hill.

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[1] *E.g.* 'If they want to depose Scott, I only wish they would not set me up as a competitor. I like the man—and admire his works to what Mr. Braham calls *Entusymusy*. All such stuff can only vex him, and do me no good.'—Byron (1813), vol. ii. p. 259.

'Scott is certainly the most wonderful writer of the day. His novels are a new literature in themselves, and his poetry as good as any—if not better—(only on an erroneous system)—and only ceased to be popular, because the vulgar learned were tired of hearing "Aristides called the Just" and Scott the Best, and ostracised him.'—Byron (1821), vol. v. p. 72.

'To return to the Giaour; I had lent my first edition, but the whole being imprinted in my memory, I had no difficulty in tracing the additions, which are great improvements, as I should have conjectured aforehand merely from their being additions. I hope your Lordship intends to proceed with this fascinating style of composition. You have access to a stream of sentiments, imagery, and manners, which are so little known to us as to convey all the interest of novelty, yet so endeared to us by the early perusal of Eastern tales, that we are not embarrassed with utter ignorance upon the subject. Vathek, bating some passages, would have made a charming subject for a tale. The conclusion is truly grand. I would give a great deal to know the originals from which it was drawn. Excuse this hasty scrawl, and believe me, my Lord, your Lordship's much obliged, very humble servant,

'WALTER SCOTT.'

If January brought the writer of this letter 'disappointment,' there was abundant consolation in store for February 1815. Guy Mannering was received with eager curiosity, and pronounced by acclamation fully worthy to share the honours of Waverley. The easy transparent flow of its style; the beautiful simplicity, and here and there the wild solemn magnificence of its sketches of scenery; the rapid, ever-heightening interest of the narrative; the unaffected kindliness of feeling, the manly purity of thought, everywhere mingled with a gentle humour and a homely sagacity; but above all, the rich variety and skilful contrast of characters and manners, at once fresh in fiction, and stamped with the unforgeable seal of truth and nature: these were charms that spoke to every heart and mind; and the few murmurs of pedantic criticism were lost in the voice of general delight, which never fails to welcome the invention that introduces to the sympathy of imagination a new group of immortal realities.

The earlier chapters of the present narrative have anticipated much of what I might, perhaps with better judgment, have reserved for this page. Taken together with the author's Introduction and Notes, those anecdotes of his days of youthful wandering must, however, have enabled the reader to trace almost as minutely as he could wish, the sources from which the novelist drew his materials, both of scenery and character; and the *Durham Garland*, which I print in the Appendix to this volume, exhausts my information concerning the humble groundwork on which fancy reared this delicious romance.

The first edition was, like that of Waverley, in three little volumes, with a humility of paper and printing which the meanest novelist would now disdain to imitate; the price a guinea. The 2000 copies of which it consisted were sold the day after the publication; and within three months came a second and a third impression, making together 5000 copies more. The sale, before those novels began to be collected, had reached nearly 10,000; and since then (to say nothing of foreign reprints of the text, and myriads of translations into every tongue of Europe) the domestic sale has amounted to 50,000.

On the rising of the Court of Session in March, Mr. and Mrs. Scott went by sea to London with their eldest girl, whom, being yet too young for general society, they again deposited with Joanna Baillie at Hampstead, while they themselves resumed, for two months, their usual quarters at kind Miss Dumergue's, in Piccadilly. Six years had elapsed since Scott last appeared in the metropolis; and brilliant as his reception had then been, it was still more so on the present occasion. Scotland had been visited in the interim, chiefly from the interest excited by his writings, by crowds of the English nobility, most of whom had found introduction to his personal acquaintance—not a few had partaken of his hospitality at Ashestiel or Abbotsford. The generation among whom, I presume, a genius of this order feels his own influence with the proudest and sweetest confidence—on whose fresh minds and ears he has himself made the first indelible impressions—the generation with whose earliest romance of the heart and fancy his idea had been blended, was now grown to the full stature; the success of these recent novels, seen on every table, the subject of every conversation, had, with those who did not doubt their parentage, far more than counterweighed his declination, dubious after all, in the poetical balance; while the mystery that hung over them quickened the curiosity of the hesitating and conjecturing many—and the name on which ever and anon some new circumstance accumulated stronger suspicion, loomed larger through the haze in which he had thought fit to envelop it. Moreover, this was a period of high national pride and excitement.

> O who that shared them ever shall forget
> The emotions of the spirit-rousing time,
> When breathless in the mart the couriers met,
> Early and late, at evening and at prime;
> When the loud cannon and the merry chime
> Hail'd news on news, as field on field was won,
> When Hope, long doubtful, soared at length sublime,
> And our glad eyes, awake as day begun,
> Watch'd Joy's broad banner rise, to meet the rising sun?
>
> O these were hours, when thrilling joy repaid
> A long, long course of darkness, doubts, and fears!
> The heart-sick faintness of the hope delayed,
> The waste, the woe, the bloodshed, and the tears
> That tracked with terror twenty rolling years—

All was forgot in that blithe jubilee.
Her downcast eye even pale Affliction rears,
To sigh a thankful prayer amid the glee
That hailed the Despot's fall, and peace and liberty ![1]

At such a time, Prince and people were well prepared to hail him who, more perhaps than any other master of the pen, had contributed to sustain the spirit of England throughout the struggle, which was as yet supposed to have been terminated on the field of Toulouse. 'Thank Heaven you are coming at last' — Joanna Baillie had written a month or two before—'Make up your mind to be stared at only a little less than the Czar of Muscovy, or old Blücher.'

And now took place James Ballantyne's 'mighty consummation of the meeting of the two bards.' Scott's own account of it, in a letter to Mr. Moore, must have been seen by most of my readers; yet I think it ought also to find a place here. 'It was,' he says, 'in the spring of 1815, that, chancing to be in London, I had the advantage of a personal introduction to Lord Byron. Report had prepared me to meet a man of peculiar habits and a quick temper, and I had some doubts whether we were likely to suit each other in society. I was most agreeably disappointed in this respect. I found Lord Byron in the highest degree courteous, and even kind. We met for an hour or two almost daily, in Mr. Murray's drawing-room, and found a great deal to say to each other. We also met frequently in parties and evening society, so that for about two months I had the advantage of a considerable intimacy with this distinguished individual. Our sentiments agreed a good deal, except upon the subjects of religion and politics, upon neither of which I was inclined to believe that Lord Byron entertained very fixed opinions. I remember saying to him that I really thought that if he lived a few years he would alter his sentiments. He answered, rather sharply, "I suppose you are one of those who prophesy I shall turn Methodist." I replied, "No—I don't expect your conversion to be of such an ordinary kind. I would rather look to see you retreat upon the Catholic faith, and distinguish yourself by the austerity of your penances. The species of religion to which you must, or may, one day attach yourself, must exercise a strong power on the imagination." He smiled gravely, and seemed to allow I might be right.

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[1] Lord of the Isles, Canto vi.

'On politics, he used sometimes to express a high strain of what is now called Liberalism; but it appeared to me that the pleasure it afforded him, as a vehicle for displaying his wit and satire against individuals in office, was at the bottom of this habit of thinking, rather than any real conviction of the political principles on which he talked. He was certainly proud of his rank and ancient family, and, in that respect, as much an aristocrat as was consistent with good sense and good breeding. Some disgusts, how adopted I know not, seemed to me to have given this peculiar and (as it appeared to me) contradictory cast of mind; but, at heart, I would have termed Byron a patrician on principle.

'Lord Byron's reading did not seem to me to have been very extensive, either in poetry or history. Having the advantage of him in that respect, and possessing a good competent share of such reading as is little read, I was sometimes able to put under his eye objects which had for him the interest of novelty. I remember particularly repeating to him the fine poem of Hardyknute, an imitation of the old Scottish ballad, with which he was so much affected, that some one who was in the same apartment asked me what I could possibly have been telling Byron by which he was so much agitated.

'I saw Byron for the last time in 1815, after I returned from France. He dined, or lunched, with me at Long's, in Bond Street. I never saw him so full of gaiety and good-humour, to which the presence of Mr. Mathews, the comedian, added not a little. Poor Terry was also present. After one of the gayest parties I ever was present at, my fellow-traveller, Mr. Scott of Gala, and I set off for Scotland, and I never saw Lord Byron again. Several letters passed between us—one perhaps every half-year. Like the old heroes in Homer, we exchanged gifts. I gave Byron a beautiful dagger mounted with gold, which had been the property of the redoubted Elfi Bey. But I was to play the part of Diomed in the Iliad, for Byron sent me, some time after, a large sepulchral vase of silver. It was full of dead men's bones, and had inscriptions on two sides of the base. One ran thus:—"The bones contained in this urn were found in certain ancient sepulchres within the long walls of Athens, in the month of February 1811." The other face bears the lines of Juvenal—"*Expende—quot libras in duce summo invenies?—Mors sola fatetur quantula sint hominum corpuscula.*"

'To these I have added a third inscription, in these words—"The gift of Lord Byron to Walter Scott."[1] There was a letter with this vase, more valuable to me than the gift itself, from the kindness with which the donor expressed himself towards me. I left it naturally in the urn with the bones; but it is now missing. As the theft was not of a nature to be practised by a mere domestic, I am compelled to suspect the inhospitality of some individual of higher station, most gratuitously exercised certainly, since, after what I have here said, no one will probably choose to boast of possessing this literary curiosity.

'We had a good deal of laughing, I remember, on what the public might be supposed to think, or say, concerning the gloomy and ominous nature of our mutual gifts.

'I think I can add little more to my recollections of Byron. He was often melancholy—almost gloomy. When I observed him in this humour, I used either to wait till it went off of its own accord, or till some natural and easy mode occurred of leading him into conversation, when the shadows almost always left his countenance, like the mist rising from a landscape. In conversation he was very animated.

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[1] Mr. Murray had, at the time of giving the vase, suggested to Lord Byron that it would increase the value of the gift to add some such inscription; but the noble poet answered modestly:—

'*April* 9, 1815.—Dear Murray, I have a great objection to your proposition about inscribing the vase—which is, that it would appear *ostentatious* on my part; and of course I must send it as it is, without any alteration.—Yours ever, BYRON.'

'I met with him very frequently in society; our mutual acquaintances doing me the honour to think that he liked to meet with me. Some very agreeable parties I can recollect—particularly one at Sir George Beaumont's—where the amiable landlord had assembled some persons distinguished for talent. Of these I need only mention the late Sir Humphry Davy, whose talents for literature were as remarkable as his empire over science. Mr. Richard Sharpe and Mr. Rogers were also present.

'I think I also remarked in Byron's temper starts of suspicion, when he seemed to pause and consider whether there had not been a secret, and perhaps offensive, meaning in something casually said to him. In this case, I also judged it best to let his mind, like a troubled spring, work itself clear, which it did in a minute or two. I was considerably older, you will recollect, than my noble friend, and had no reason to fear his misconstruing my sentiments towards him, nor had I ever the slightest reason to doubt that they were kindly returned on his part. If I had occasion to be mortified by the display of genius which threw into the shade such pretensions as I was then supposed to possess, I might console myself that, in my own case, the materials of mental happiness had been mingled in a greater proportion.

'I rummage my brains in vain for what often rushes into my head unbidden—little traits and sayings which recall his looks, manner, tone, and gestures; and I have always continued to think that a crisis of life was arrived, in which a new career of fame was opened to him, and that had he been permitted to start upon it, he would have obliterated the memory of such parts of his life as friends would wish to forget.'

I have nothing to add to this interesting passage, except that Joanna Baillie's tragedy of The Family Legend being performed at one of the theatres during Scott's stay in town, Lord Byron accompanied the authoress and Mr. and Mrs. Scott to witness the representation; and that the vase with the Attic bones appears to have been sent to Scott very soon after his arrival in London, not, as Mr. Moore had gathered from the hasty diction of his 'Reminiscences,' at some 'subsequent period of their acquaintance.' This is sufficiently proved by the following note:—

'*To the Right Honourable Lord Byron, etc., etc.*

'PICCADILLY, *Monday*.

'MY DEAR LORD—I am not a little ashamed of the value of the shrine in which your Lordship has enclosed the Attic relics; but were it yet more costly, the circumstance could not add value to it in my estimation, when considered as a pledge of your Lordship's regard and friendship. The principal pleasure which I have derived from my connexion with literature, has been the access which it has given me to those who are distinguished by talents and accomplishments; and, standing so high as your Lordship justly does in that rank, my satisfaction in making your acquaintance has been proportionally great. It is one of those wishes which, after having been long and earnestly entertained, I have found completely gratified upon becoming personally known to you; and I trust you will permit me to profit by it frequently, during my stay in town.—I am, my dear Lord, your truly obliged and faithful WALTER SCOTT.'

It was also in the spring of 1815 that Scott had, for the first time, the honour of being presented to the Prince Regent. His Royal Highness had (as has been seen from a letter to Joanna Baillie, already quoted) signified, more than a year before this time, his wish that the poet should revisit London—and, on reading his Edinburgh Address in particular, he said to Mr. Dundas that 'Walter Scott's charming behaviour about the laureateship had made him doubly desirous of seeing him at Carlton House.' More lately, on receiving a copy of the Lord of the Isles, his Royal Highness's librarian had been commanded to write to him in these terms :—

'*To Walter Scott, Esq., Edinburgh.*

'CARLTON HOUSE, *January* 19, 1815.

'MY DEAR SIR—You are deservedly so great a favourite with the Prince Regent, that his librarian is not only directed to return to you the thanks of his Royal Highness for your valuable present, but to inform you that the Prince Regent particularly wishes to see you whenever you come to London ; and desires you will always, when you are there, come into his library whenever you please.—Believe me always, with sincerity, one of your warmest admirers and most obliged friends,

'J. S. CLARKE.'

On hearing from Mr. Croker (then Secretary to the Admiralty) that Scott was to be in town by the middle of March, the Prince said—'Let me know when he comes, and I'll get up a snug little dinner that will suit him' ; and, after he had been presented and graciously received at the *levee*, he was invited to dinner accordingly, through his excellent friend Mr. Adam (now Lord Chief Commissioner of the Jury Court in Scotland),[1] who at that time held a confidential office in the royal household. The Regent had consulted with Mr. Adam also as to the composition of the party. 'Let us have,' said he, 'just a few friends of his own—and the more Scotch the better' ; and both the Chief Commissioner and Mr. Croker assure me that the party was the most interesting and agreeable one in their recollection. It comprised, I believe, the Duke of York—the late Duke of Gordon (then Marquess of Huntly)—the Marquess of Hertford (then Lord Yarmouth)—the Earl of Fife—and Scott's early friend Lord Melville. 'The Prince and Scott,' says Mr. Croker, 'were the two most brilliant story-tellers in their several ways, that I have ever happened to meet; they were both aware of their *forte*, and both exerted themselves that evening with delightful effect. On going home, I really could not decide which of them had shone the most. The Regent was enchanted with Scott, as Scott with him; and on all his subsequent visits to London he was a frequent guest at the royal table.' The Lord Chief Commissioner remembers that the Prince was particularly delighted with the poet's anecdotes of the old Scotch judges and lawyers, which his Royal Highness sometimes *capped* by ludicrous traits of certain ermined sages of his own acquaintance. Scott told, among others, a story, which he was fond of telling; and the commentary of his Royal Highness on hearing it amused Scott, who often mentioned it afterwards. The anecdote is this:—A certain Judge, whenever he went on a particular circuit, was in the habit of visiting a gentleman of good fortune in the neighbourhood of one of the assize towns, and staying at least one night, which, being both of them ardent chess-players, they usually concluded with their favourite game. One Spring circuit the battle was not decided at daybreak, so the Judge said—'Weel, Donald, I must e'en come back this gate in the harvest, and let the game lie ower for the present'; and back he came in October, but not to his old friend's hospitable house; for that gentleman had, in the interim, been apprehended on a capital charge (of forgery), and his name stood on the *Porteous Roll*, or list of those who were about to be tried under his former guest's auspices. The laird was indicted and tried accordingly, and the jury returned a verdict of *guilty*. The Judge forthwith put on his cocked hat (which answers to the black cap in England), and pronounced the sentence of the law in the usual terms—'To be hanged by the neck until you be dead; and may the Lord have mercy upon your unhappy soul!' Having concluded this awful formula in his most sonorous cadence, the Judge, dismounting his formidable beaver, gave a familiar nod to his unfortunate acquaintance, and said to him, in a sort of chuckling whisper—'And now, Donald, my man, I think I've checkmated you for ance.' The Regent laughed heartily at this specimen of judicial humour; and 'I'faith, Walter,' said he, 'this old big-wig seems to have taken things as coolly as my tyrannical self. Don't you remember Tom Moore's description of me at breakfast—

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[1] This most amiable and venerable gentleman, my dear and kind friend, died at Edinburgh on the 17th February 1839, in the 89th year of his age. He retained his strong mental faculties in their perfect vigour to the last days of this long life, and with them all the warmth of social feelings which had endeared him to all who were so happy as to have any opportunity of knowing him. The reader will find an affectionate tribute to his worth, from Sir Walter Scott's Diary, in a subsequent volume of these Memoirs.—[March 1839.]

> The table spread with tea and toast,
> Death-warrants and the Morning Post?'

Towards midnight, the Prince called for 'a bumper, with all the honours, to the Author of Waverley,' and looked significantly, as he was charging his own glass, to Scott. Scott seemed somewhat puzzled for a moment, but instantly recovering himself, and filling his glass to the brim, said, 'Your Royal Highness looks as if you thought I had some claim to the honours of this toast. I have no such pretensions, but shall take good care that the real Simon Pure hears of the high compliment that has now been paid him.' He then drank off his claret, and joined in the cheering, which the Prince himself timed. But before the company could resume their seats, his Royal Highness exclaimed, 'Another of the same, if you please, to the Author of Marmion—and now, Walter, my man, I have checkmated you for *ance*.' The second bumper was followed by cheers still more prolonged: and Scott then rose and returned thanks in a short address, which struck the Lord Chief Commissioner as 'alike grave and graceful.' This story has been circulated in a very perverted shape. I now give it on the authority of my venerated friend.—He adds, that having occasion, the day after, to call on the Duke of York, his Royal Highness said to him—'Upon my word, Adam, my brother went rather too near the wind about Waverley—but nobody could have turned the thing more prettily than Walter Scott did—and upon the whole I never had better fun.'[1]

The Regent, as was his custom with those he most delighted to honour, uniformly addressed the poet, even at their first dinner, by his Christian name, 'Walter.'

Before he left town, he again dined at Carlton House, when the party was a still smaller one than before, and the merriment, if possible, still more free. That nothing might be wanting, the Prince sung several capital songs in the course of that evening—as witness the lines in *Sultan Serendib*—

> I love a Prince will bid the bottle pass,
> Exchanging with his subjects glance and glass,
> In fitting time can, gayest of the gay,
> Keep up the jest and mingle in the lay.
> Such Monarchs best our freeborn humour suit,
> But despots must be stately, stern, and mute.[2]

Before he returned to Edinburgh, on the 22nd of May, the Regent sent him a gold snuff-box, set in brilliants, with a medallion of his Royal Highness's head on the lid, 'as a testimony' (writes Mr. Adam, in transmitting it) 'of the high opinion his Royal Highness entertains of your genius and merit.'

I transcribe what follows, from James Ballantyne's Memoranda :—'After Mr. Scott's first interview with his Sovereign, one or two intimate friends took the liberty of enquiring what judgment he had formed of the Regent's talents. He declined giving any definite answer—but repeated, that "he was the first gentleman he had seen—certainly the first *English* gentleman of his day ;—there was something about him which, independently of the

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[1] Since this Narrative was first published, I have been told by two gentlemen who were at this dinner, that, according to their recollection, the Prince *did not* on that occasion run 'so near the wind' as my text represents ; and I am inclined to believe that a scene at Dalkeith, in 1822, may have been unconsciously blended with a gentler rehearsal of Carlton House, 1815. The Chief Commissioner had promised to revise my sheets for the present edition ; but alas ! he never did so—and I must now leave the matter as it stands. [1839.]

[2] Scott's Poetical Works, vol. xi. p. 353.

prestige, the 'divinity, which hedges a King,' marked him as standing entirely by himself; but as to his abilities, spoken of as distinct from his charming manners, how could any one form a fair judgment of that man who introduced whatever subject he chose, discussed it just as long as he chose, and dismissed it when he chose?"'

Ballantyne adds—'What I have now to say is more important, not only in itself, but as it will enable you to give a final contradiction to an injurious report which has been in circulation; viz. that the Regent asked him as to the authorship of Waverley, and received a distinct and solemn denial. I took the bold freedom of requesting to know *from him* whether his Royal Highness had questioned him on that subject, and what had been his answer. He glanced at me with a look of wild surprise, and said—"What answer I might have made to such a question, put to me by my Sovereign, perhaps I do not, or rather perhaps I do know; but I was never put to the test. He is far too well-bred a man ever to put so ill-bred a question."'

The account I have already given of the convivial scene alluded to would probably have been sufficient; but it can do no harm to place Ballantyne's, or rather Scott's own testimony also on record.

I ought not to have omitted that during Scott's residence in London, in April 1815, he lost one of the English friends, to a meeting with whom he had looked forward with the highest pleasure. Mr. George Ellis died on the 15th of that month, at his seat of Sunninghill. This threw a cloud over what would otherwise have been a period of unmixed enjoyment. Mr. Canning penned the epitaph for that dearest of his friends; but he submitted it to Scott's consideration before it was engraved.

NOTE

The Addenda obtainable from Lockhart's 1848 Abridgment of l Biography are very trifling in the case of this volume. On page : the word 'landless' is substituted for 'bankrupt' in the report Scott's conversation about his 'good friend Nippy.' To the accou of the sales of the Lady of the Lake on page 119 we may add tl sentence: 'Since which date I understand that, in spite of legal ar illegal piracies, the fair demand has been well kept up.' Caref search has not discovered any further additions.

APPENDIX

THE DURHAM GARLAND

IN THREE PARTS

[The following is the *Garland* referred to at pages 491 and 512 in connexion with the novel of Guy Mannering. The ballad was taken down from the recitation of Mrs. Young of Castle-Douglas, who, as her family informed Mr. Train, had long been in the habit of repeating it over to them once in the year, in order that it might not escape from her memory.]

PART I

1

A worthy Lord of birth and state,
Who did in Durham live of late—
But I will not declare his name,
By reason of his birth and fame.

2

This Lord he did a-hunting go;
If you the truth of all would know,
He had indeed a noble train,
Of Lords and Knights and Gentlemen.

3

This noble Lord he left the train
Of Lords and Knights and Gentlemen;
And hearing not the horn to blow,
He could not tell which way to go.

4

But he did wander to and fro,
Being weary, likewise full of woe:
At last Dame Fortune was so kind
That he the Keeper's house did find.

5

He went and knocked at the door,
He thought it was so late an hour.
The Forester did let him in,
And kindly entertained him.

6

About the middle of the night,
When-as the stars did shine most bright,
This Lord was in a sad surprise,
Being wakened by a fearful noise.

7

Then he did rise and call with speed,
To know the reason then indeed,
Of all that shrieking and those cries
Which did disturb his weary eyes.

8

'I'm sorry, Sir,' the Keeper said,
'That you should be so much afraid;
But I do hope all will be well,
For my wife she is in travail.'

9

The noble Lord was learned and wise,
To know the Planets in the skies.
He saw one evil Planet reign,
He called the Forester again.

10

He gave him then to understand,
He'd have the Midwife hold her hand;
But he was answered by the maid,
'My Mistress is delivered.'

11

At one o'clock that very morn,
A lovely infant there was born ;
It was indeed a charming boy
Which brought the man and wife much joy.

12

The Lord was generous, kind, and free,
And proffered Godfather to be ;
The Goodman thanked him heartily
For his goodwill and courtesy.

13

A Parson was sent for with speed,
For to baptize the child indeed ;
And after that, as I heard say,
In mirth and joy they spent the day.

14

This Lord did noble presents give,
Which all the servants did receive.
They prayed God to enrich his store,
For they never had so much before.

15

And likewise to the child he gave
A present noble, rich, and brave ;
It was a charming cabinet,
That was with pearls and jewels set.

16

And within it was a chain of gold,
Would dazzle eyes for to behold ;
A richer gift, as I may say,
Was not beheld this many a day.

17

He charged his father faithfully,
That he himself would keep the key,
Until the child could write and read—
And then to give him it indeed ;—

18

'Pray do not open it at all
Whatever should on you befall;
For it may do my godson good,
If it be rightly understood.'

19

This Lord did not declare his name,
Nor yet the place from whence he came,
But secretly he did depart,
And left them grieved to the heart.

PART II

1

The second part I now unfold,
As true a story as e'er was told,
Concerning of a lovely child,
Who was obedient, sweet, and mild.

2

This child did take his learning so,
If you the truth of all would know,
At eleven years of age indeed,
Both Greek and Latin he could read.

3

Then thinking of his cabinet,
That was with pearls and jewels set,
He asked his father for the key,
Which he gave him right speedily;

4

And when he did the same unlock,
He was with great amazement struck
When he the riches did behold,
And likewise saw the chain of Gold.

5

But searching farther he did find
A paper which disturbed his mind,
That was within the cabinet,
In Greek and Latin it was writ.

6

My child, serve God that is on high,
Aud pray to him incessantly ;
Obey your parents, love your king,
That nothing may your conscience sting.

7

At seven years hence your fate will be,
You must be hanged upon a tree ;
Then pray to God both night and day,
To let that hour pass away.

8

When he these woeful lines did read,
He with a sigh did say indeed,
'If hanging be my destiny,
My parents shall not see me die ;

9

'For I will wander to and fro,
I'll go where I no one do know ;
But first I'll ask my parents' leave,
In hopes their blessing to receive.'

10

Then locking up his cabinet,
He went from his own chamber straight
Unto his only parents dear,
Beseeching them with many a tear

11

That they would grant what he would have—
'But first your blessing I do crave,
And beg you'll let me go away,
'Twill do me good another day.'

12

* * * * *
* * * * *

'And if I live I will return,
When seven years are past and gone.'

13

Both man and wife did then reply,
'I fear, my son, that we shall die;
If we should yield to let you go,
Our aged hearts would break with woe.'

14

But he entreated eagerly,
While they were forced to comply,
And give consent to let him go,
But where, alas! they did not know.

15

In the third part you soon shall find,
That fortune was to him most kind,
And after many dangers past,
He came to Durham at the last.

PART III

1

He went by chance, as I heard say,
To that same house that very day
In which his Godfather did dwell;
But mind what luck to him befell—

2

This child did crave a service there,
On which came out his Godfather,
And seeing him a pretty youth,
He took him for his Page in truth.

3

Then in this place he pleased so well,
That 'bove the rest he bore the bell ;
This child so well the Lord did please,
He raised him higher by degrees.

4

He made him Butler sure indeed,
And then his Steward with all speed,
Which made the other servants spite,
And envy him both day and night.

4

He was never false unto his trust,
But proved ever true and just ;
And to the Lord did hourly pray
To guide him still both night and day.

6

In this place, plainly it appears,
He lived the space of seven years ;
His parents then he thought upon,
And of his promise to return.

7

Then humbly of his Lord did crave,
That he his free consent might have
To go and see his parents dear,
He had not seen this many a year.

8

Then having leave, away he went,
Not dreaming of the false intent
That was contrived against him then
By wicked, false, deceitful men.

9

They had in his portmanteau put
This noble Lord's fine golden cup ;
That when the Lord at dinner was,
The cup was missed as come to pass.

10

'Where can it be?' this Lord
'We had it here but yesterda
The Butler then replied with
'If you will hear the truth in

11

'Your darling Steward which
With feathered nest away is fl
I'll warrant you he has that, a
That doth belong unto your s

12

'No,' says this Lord, 'that ca
For I have tried his honesty';
'Then,' said the Cook, 'my L
Upon a tree full ten feet high

13

Then hearing what these men
He sent a messenger that day,
To take him with a hue and c
And bring him back immediat

14

They searched his portmante
In which they found the cup i
Then was he struck with sad
He could not well believe his

15

The assizes then were drawin
And he was tried and doomed
And his injured innocence
Could nothing say in his defe

16

But going to the Gallows tree,
On which he thought to hang
He clapped his hands upon his
And thus in tears these words

17

'Blind Fortune will be Fortune still,
I see, let man do what he will;
For though this day I needs must die,
I am not guilty—no, not I.'

18

This noble Lord was in amaze,
He stood and did with wonder gaze;
Then he spoke out with words so mild,—
'What mean you by that saying, Child?'

19

'Will that your Lordship,' then said he,
'Grant one day's full reprieve for me,
A dismal story I'll relate,
Concerning of my wretched fate.'

20

'Speak up, my child,' this Lord did say,
'I say you shall not die this day—
And if I find you innocent,
I'll crown your days with sweet content.'

21

He told him all his dangers past,
He had gone through from first to last,
He fetched the chain and cabinet,
Likewise the paper that was writ.

22

When that this noble Lord did see,
He ran to him most eagerly,
And in his arms did him embrace,
Repeating of those words in haste.—

23

'My Child, my Child, how blessed am I
Thou art innocent, and shalt not die;
For I'm indeed thy Godfather,
And thou wast born in fair Yorkshire.